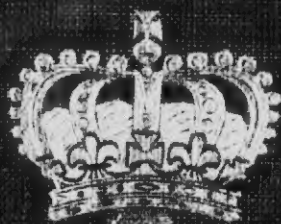
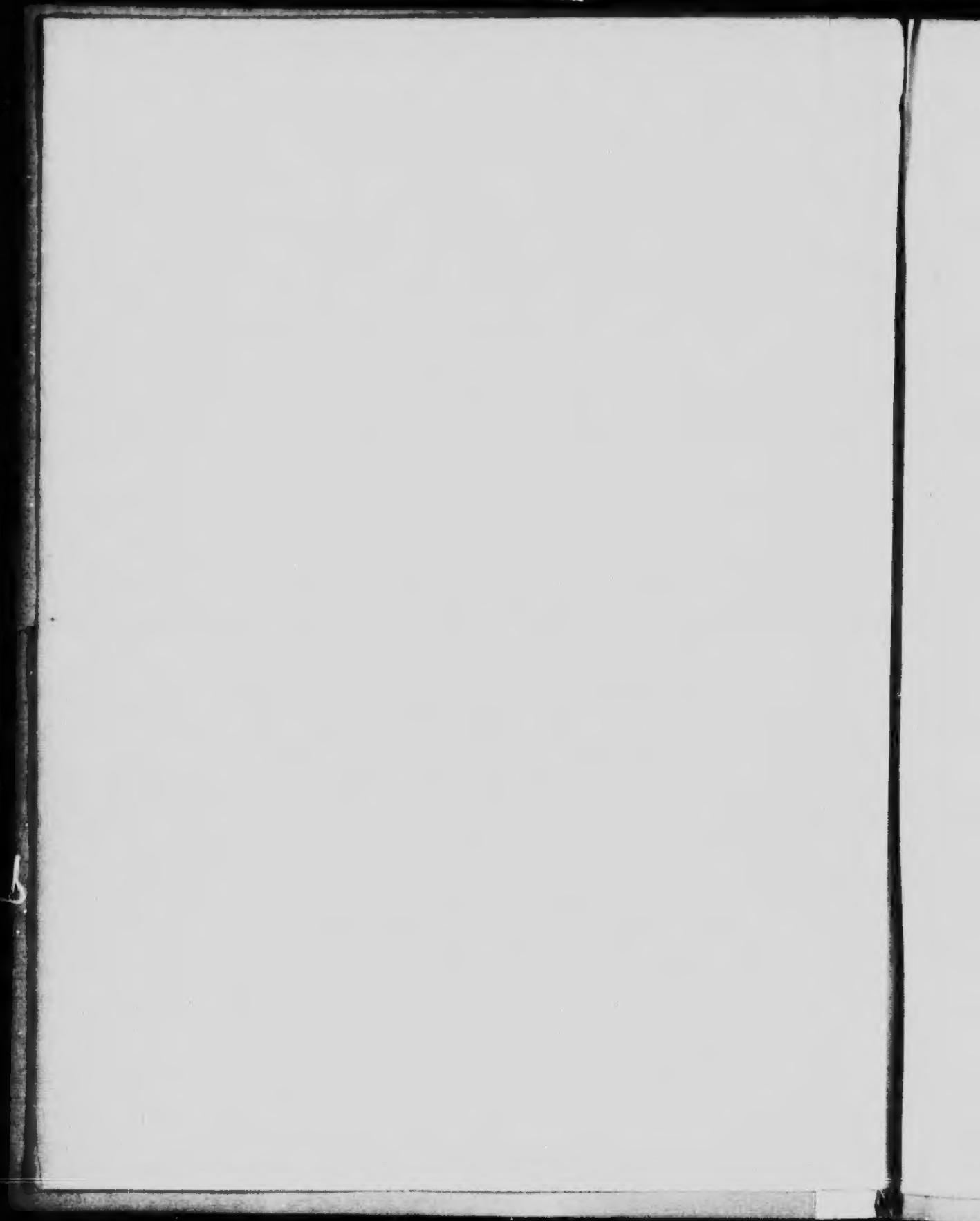


SHIFTING SCENES

SIR EDWARD MALET, G.C.B.



SHIFTING SCENES



SHIFTING SCENES

OR MEMORIES OF MANY MEN
IN MANY LANDS

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR EDWARD MALET, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
SOMETIME H.M. AMBASSADOR TO GERMANY

TORONTO
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DEDICATED TO
MY DEAREST WIFE
AT WHOSE SUGGESTION
THIS BOOK WAS
WRITTEN

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SHIFTING SCENES

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS—THE UNITED STATES

NOW that it is over I look back on the experience with equanimity. The beginning terrified me. All hypnotic doings have about them something of the awful. To be compelled, whether you wish it or not, to obey another is humiliating, but if you add to this that the hypnotizer is an immaterial being with human intelligence and a supernatural dexterity in exercising it, my mental though powerless revolt against the pressure which was being exercised upon me will be easily understood.

I am an unusually good sleeper, and ascribe to this talent in great measure the steady duration of my health. It has hardly ever occurred to me to

pass what is called a bad night ; and nights which have passed lightly have been more delightful, if possible, than the dead-asleep ones, for then delightful dreams, succeeded by quick remembrance, would flit through my brain. But on the occasion of the experiences I am about to relate the dream element appeared to be absent. I found myself suddenly wide awake after having slept for an hour, and although it could hardly be past midnight, and no light was in the room, I saw a little man in black, cross-legged and cross-armed, sitting at the foot of my bed. The exceeding friendliness of his expression was the first thing that struck me. His eyes and mouth scintillated with kindness ; his face was sharp, furrowed, and intellectual. He looked like Voltaire with the added qualities of charity and benevolence.

"I have come to interview you," he said, in a voice which was rasping in enunciation but singularly sweet in tone. "My name is Whiffles. I am *The Reporter*."

Now, if there is one thing in this world that is abhorrent to all the traditional and self-generated

instincts of a diplomatist it is to allow himself to be interviewed. My indignation caused me to give a kick with my feet, upon which he was sitting. Whereupon he rose in the air, swaying to and fro like a feather, and then gently descended without weight into his former position. In all my doings with him he possessed this, so to say, imponderable gravity. During our intercourse I often kicked, but it never had any other effect than to make him ascend and descend airily. As time went on it proved a tremendous power in his favour, because it rendered the display of muscular vigour on my part, in illustration of mental temper, useless. I soon found that I had nothing to aid me in my distress but verbal argument, but in this there was always a friendly give and take between us, salted by occasional asperity.

After he had descended into his sitting position I observed that his forefinger was held up admonishingly.

"You know," he said, "that everybody has to give an account of himself. Some do so in their lifetime; some allow this opportunity to pass, but

they do not escape the ordeal—sooner or later every soul is allowed to tell his own story. No one is condemned unheard. Numberless motives, good, bad, and indifferent, restrain people from giving the story of their lives while they are on earth. For the masses there is the very sufficient excuse that nobody in this world wishes to hear it; that is a good excuse and will count in favour of every person so actuated. The bad excuses are cowardice and having something to conceal; the indifferent ones are modesty, procrastination, or idleness. That is enough explanation for you. Your conscience will tell you under which rubric you fall."

I looked about for a reply, but found none.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "to make things pleasant I will assume that you owe your silence to modesty. All men who have attained to high positions in the career which they have followed owe to the world the record of their lives. The edifice which is slowly but eternally rising to the glory of God is built by these lives. Do not misunderstand me. Millions of lives of which no record exists have contributed their share to this

glory—if I have singled you out for a cross-examination on your life, you must not think that it is because you are in any way pre-eminent as an artificer in the divine structure. I have merely come as an extraordinary interviewer of an ordinary man. It is my whim and you must bend to it. I go here, there, and everywhere, but I never leave my subjects till I have turned them inside out; so sit up and answer my questions—the quicker you do so the quicker you will be rid of me. Stop; don't argue. I will give you one piece of information which will set your mind at ease; I shall not ask you to divulge any secrets, and will put to you no question to which the answer could expose you to the charge of indiscretion, or give offence to any living soul. I mention this because you will find that you cannot help replying truly and to the best of your ability to my questions."

"But," I said, "the story of my life would take days to tell. It is absurd to sit there and ask me to relate it as if it were a magazine article of half an hour's reading."

"Ah," said Whiffles, "there lies my power. You

must often have heard tell of the drowning man who has been saved after losing consciousness, and who will relate as the last thing he remembers that the whole of his past life sped through his mind in an instant. I shall be off at cockcrow, yet by that time you won't have a shred, but what I please to allow, to cover you. Do not be anxious," he added, "I know the exact amount of covering which you require. I shall leave you a sheet, and even a blanket, if I see you want it.

"I know all about your youth. It may be passed over for the present. You entered the service in 1854, and as you were born in 1837 you could only be sixteen years old then. Was not your appointment at that early age rather an abuse of patronage?"

"Possibly. My father was a friend of Lord Clarendon, who at that time was Minister for Foreign Affairs, and my nomination as attaché to the Legation at Frankfort, where my father held the post of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, was dated the 10th of October, which was my sixteenth birthday."

"A very nice birthday present."

"I had left Eton but a short time before. Such a thing could not be done now, but in those days nothing but the appointment was necessary—there were no examinations. For many years it did me harm. The grade above mine was that of paid attaché, and ten of my juniors were passed to that rank over my head on the ground that I had been appointed when I ought to have been still in the schoolroom. It was not till 1871, when I was nominated to be Secretary of Legation at Peking over the heads of several of my colleagues, that I regained my relative position according to seniority."

"I suppose your spirit rebelled till then?"

"It did. But I would like to make this note, that during the whole of my career I have found that what I disliked in anticipation was generally for my good. My being passed over gave me the stimulus which eventually enabled me to regain my place. In all cases in which I have been sent to posts to which I did not wish to go, the result has been my more speedy advancement."

"Very few people know what is good for them," said Whiffles.

"That is it," I replied, "and I do wish the young fellows in the service would understand it. Many of them imagine that happiness is only to be found at Paris, Vienna, Berlin, or Rome; whereas, in fact, their professional salvation lies in going to China, South America, and all outlandish posts. In the former case you are like a squirrel in a cage. In the latter, you breathe the air of the world, which contains in it the salt of life. Without the knowledge which you can alone acquire in this wider field your intellect will remain stunted."

"Somewhat of a paradox; you name the four centres of intellectual culture, and say that you should leave them for countries where progress is behindhand in order to complete your diplomatic education. What can you learn out of Europe that you do not find more flourishing at home?"

"Nothing expands the mind more than the study of the rough material before it has been subject to the loom of civilisation. And then, again, Imperialism. How can a man who wanders from

court to court on the Continent realise the magnificence of our Empire and the responsibilities it entails on the humblest of officials in Her Majesty's service? Make the world your travelling ground, not Europe. Go to the east, west, and south; see the British flag in every harbour and creek, and British enterprise in every quarter of the globe. Of course, you can read about these things, but seeing them brings them home to you a thousand-fold, and changes you from a *dilettante* follower of copy-book instruction to a proud and responsibility-feeling unit in the maintenance of an empire which you have seen and understood. Little Pedlington no longer bounds your mind; the wide horizon has opened to you.

"There can be no doubt that the intelligent mind expands as the body travels. Unless a man be a fool, the more he sees the more he knows, and the knowledge which grows under the influence of travel is especially useful to a diplomatist in one particular in his future career. It gives him a sense of proportion, a point on which nearly all men's faculties are deficient when they begin.

They are apt to imagine that the business upon which they are engaged is the one on which the general success of British diplomacy hinges. They forget that a triumph of our influence at one court may bring about its collapse at another ; and that before they push any point to the extreme for the advantage of the diplomatic campaign which they may have on hand, they should weigh the consequences of what they are about on the policy of the Empire as a whole. This wider vision is a very important quality in the value of an agent, and I should feel greater confidence in its being possessed by a man who had been to distant posts, and had thereby acquired a knowledge of the various aspects of the polity of the world, than by one who knew only the pleasant courts of Europe."

"Did you like the service?"

"Like it! I loved it! I do not suppose it would be possible for a man to have had a happier life than I have. What can be more glorious than to be mixed up in most of the great events of the age in which you live ; to pass through life

as it were without a dull day; to have come in contact with all the statesmen who have made the history of your time; to have played one's part, even though a modest one, in never-to-be-forgotten events; and at the end, having arrived at a state of blessed repose, to have one's mind stored with reminiscences of imperishable interest?"

"Is not the repose a little irksome, notwithstanding the reminiscences?"

"Not to me. I have always been of a singularly idle disposition, tempered by an acute sense of never giving way to it as long as there is the smallest thing to be done. Now that there is nothing to do, I give this natural disposition full fling and revel in it to my heart's content. Work never had any attraction for me, except as being a means to an end, the end being to have got through with it, and as this end never came till I quitted the career after forty-one years' service, I feel that I have done my share and that I may rest and be very thankful."

"Stay a bit, you really talk as if you had gone through hard work, whereas everybody knows that

in the higher posts you had nothing to do but to direct, and in the subordinate ones, two or three hours' attendance in the Chancery is all that is required of you, so that unless you include balls and parties in 'work' I do not see where the hardness of the work in comparison with that of any other profession comes in."

"You talk like the general public or the fashionable novel. Take Washington during the Civil War; we had to be in the Chancery at nine—there was no time for luncheon, a few sandwiches were brought to us on a tray, which we mopped down with lemonade. At a quarter-past seven we ran to Willard's Hotel and swallowed a cocktail, harking back just in time for dinner at eight. This was the regular routine, and it constantly happened that, in addition, we had to go back to the Chancery at night and work till twelve or one in the morning. A similar state of things exists in all great posts when stirring public events are going on."

"Did you know Abe Lincoln?"

"The President, yes indeed. I am glad to hear

you call him by his familiar name. He was a great man—one whom the homely and loving appellation cannot belittle. Of all the great men I have known, he is the one who has left upon me the impression of a sterling son of God. Straight-forward, unflinching, not loving the work he had to do, but facing it with a bold and true heart; mild whenever he had a chance; stern as iron when the public weal required it, following a bee-line to the goal which duty set before him. I can still feel the grip of his massive hand and the searching look of his kindly eye."

"He had his joke always ready, hadn't he?"

"Many were ascribed to him, some true, many invented. I remember that when Lord Lyons, who was a bachelor, went to communicate the news of the marriage of the Prince of Wales to him officially, he took the Queen's letter in his hand and said, 'Well, Lord Lyons, all I can say is, "Go and do thou likewise."' I personally only heard him once make a joke. A deputation of Indian chiefs were received by him in the drawing-room of the White House, which, as you know, is the President's

official residence, and I happened to be among the guests on the occasion. A large terrestrial globe was in the middle of the room, and when the chiefs came in they seated themselves in a semicircle round it. Whether this was the result of accident or design I do not know; at all events, after the first formalities had been got through, the President turned their attention to the globe. 'This,' he said, putting his hand upon it and giving it a slight rotatory motion, 'is a representation in small of this great earth on which we live,' and then, catching himself up with a twinkle in his eye, as much as to say that he must be careful lest he misled them, he added, 'not the legs, they don't form part of the shape of the earth, only the globe,' and he made it swiftly revolve. Then he suddenly stopped it, put his forefinger on Great Britain and said, 'We white people all come from this little spot. It is small, but we have spread amazingly since we began to wander.'

"But as we have dropped on the subject of the United States, I should like to say a word or two more. You are not in a hurry?"

"In a hurry!" cried Whiffles with a shrill chuckle, "as far as you are concerned, I represent eternity."

"What I have on my mind to say is this, that everyone in the service should rejoice if he has a chance to go there. It is only by contact with its people that you can overcome the impression which you are liable to form if you have never been in the country—an erroneous impression which is engendered by occasional antagonism in political questions, of which it is very difficult for us to fathom the motives, but which we too frequently ascribe to a generally hostile feeling—and next, the more private difficulty of assigning to our American visitors the intellectual and social positions which they hold at home, and of receiving them accordingly. With regard to the first point, my experience leads me to say that however high political feeling may run, our countrymen individually are certain of being treated with extraordinary courtesy and hospitality. You will remember that during the Civil War party feeling ran high. Although the attitude of our Government was

correct, there were many indications which gave the United States reasons to apprehend that any signal success of the South might induce its policy to veer. The consequence was naturally distrust and anxiety. These two feelings entertained towards a nation create resentment and, in the more enthusiastic minds, hatred. During the winter before the great battles, which culminated at Gettysburg, the two armies confronted each other in repose, and I, together with one or two other Secretaries, received an invitation to go to a ball at the front. General Andrew Webb, whose father was Minister in Brazil, which had been my previous post, was our host. In the afternoon we made the acquaintance of General Meade, and then went to the review of some 200,000 men. We afterwards rode to the outposts and withdrew when our presence attracted the fire of the Southerners, giving us practical evidence of the contiguity of the hostile armies. We dined with the General, and about nine o'clock we sallied forth to the ball, which took place in a huge tent. All the belles of Washington were present, and on entering we

found ourselves in the presence of a brilliant throng. A quadrille was going on, couples were advancing and receding in the graceful maze of the dance, when, to our great surprise, the music suddenly stopped, the dancers drew back to either side, making a way down the centre, and the strains of our beloved 'God save the Queen' struck up as, escorted by our hosts, we walked down the avenue formed by the dancers. I do not think that such an incident would have been possible under similar circumstances in any other nation of the world. Think of the stupendous struggle in which the North was engaged, the high tide of national feeling, the distrust with which Great Britain was regarded at the time,—yet here, in the centre of the vast host which represented the fighting power of the North, a small knot of Englishmen, whose only title to regard was that they belonged to the Legation which represented the distrusted Power, was treated with a courtesy and ceremony which could not have been greater had our Governments been allied. During the two years that I was in the

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United States all the members of our service were treated with constant kindness and hospitality, and I gained by intimate contact with Americans an affection for them which has caused me to delight in their society from that day to this. So I say again, if any Secretary has a chance of going to Washington, let him bless his stars."

"And stripes," put in Whiffles.

"I hate silly jokes," I said, and Whiffles went up into the air, and as he sank to rest again cross-legged at the foot of the bed he said—

"The essence of a joke is to be silly."

"A joke," I rejoined, "may be good or bad."

"You are confusing," he retorted; "the adjectives 'good' or 'bad' only apply to a joke in action."

"Well, listen to this joke," I said, my thoughts jumping back unaccountably to a long-forgotten remembrance, "A traveller in the shires rested at noon at a wayside hostelry and took luncheon. When it was finished he asked for the bill. The landlord brought it to him, and after casting a glance at it he looked at Boniface and said, 'What is your name?' 'My name,' replied the landlord,

'is Partridge.' 'Ah,' said the traveller, 'by the length of your bill I should have thought it would have been Woodcock!'

A broad grin rippled over Whiffles' wrinkled features. "It's not a joke at all," he said; "it's an anecdote."

"Well, joke or anecdote, I have told it to you because it was always a special favourite with Prince Bismarck."

"Right," said Whiffles. "Thank you; it is always interesting to hear of the small things that interest great minds. I suppose you have some reminiscences of Prince Bismarck which are of greater interest."

"I will relate to you a little story which is told about him, though whether it be true or not I have never had any means of even forming an opinion; still as it has a deep lesson for all young ladies it is not worthless, whether it has any foundation or not. When he was an unknown youngster wandering about his native woods with his gun, he fell in love with the daughter of the Prefect of the province, who returned his affection to the

extent that he felt warranted in asking her to marry him. In reply she owned that she was not indifferent to him, but she declined to accept his offer, and on being pressed for her reason she blushingly confessed that she was of an ambitious nature, and that she had long made up her mind never to marry except for rank and position——"

"So she married the barber," put in Whiffles.

"Just so," I replied; "but probably the whole story is a 'shave.'"

"Shave!" he said sententiously, "a slang term now obsolete. I believe it used to mean a report which had no foundation."

"Really, Whiffles," I began, somewhat nettled at the dogmatic way in which he took me up.

"Mr. Whiffles, if you please," he cried. "If you have not learnt the lesson already, I had better teach it you forthwith. Never neglect formality when you are dealing with a person with whom you are in business relations. You were wrong to address me as 'Whiffles.' Sooner or later we may quarrel and you will revert to 'Mr. Whiffles.' We had better stick to that all through, so as not to

aggravate any passing difference between us by your putting in the 'Mr.' when you feel inclined to bristle. Excuse me; I daresay you have often been pulled up by your superiors. I know it is disagreeable, but it shows breeding to take it in good part."

"Yes," I said quietly, though I did not see where the "superior" came in. "It has not happened to me often, but I am not exempt from the experience. At Washington any quantity of letters arrived daily asking every imaginable question, and often making untenable complaints. They were all opened by Lord Lyons, who made a pencil note upon them indicating the tenor of the answer to be sent, and returned them to the Chancery. Draft answers were then written, which were again sent up to Lord Lyons with the letters. He would nearly always alter the wording. Then he put an 'L' at the bottom, and returned them to be written out for signature. In this way not a letter issued from the Legation which had not been approved by the chief. It was a most valuable safeguard, for you can never be sure what a young man may

say when he gets a pen into his hand. It is the moment when the evil spirit of the Jack-in-office, unless he be entirely exempt from it, which is very rare, gets the better of him, and prompts him to make some epigrammatic or cutting reply. I learned no more valuable lesson while working under Lord Lyons than that every letter received must be answered, and that the answer must be staid in form and well considered in substance, whatever might be the ignorance, the petulance, or the extravagance of the writer to whose letter you were replying. The duty of writing the drafts in the Chancery at Washington was assigned to the senior second secretary, who was termed 'Head of the Chancery.' He often, however, exercised his juniors in drafting answers which seemed to present no difficulty, and an occasion on which I was decidedly 'pulled up' occurred soon after I arrived. The Head of the Chancery gave me a letter to which an answer had to be written, and told me to draft it. I dashed off what I thought would do, trying to make it as short as possible, and it went down for approval. In due time the

box came back, the Head of the Chancery unlocked it, took out the bundle of drafts, and presently stalked angrily to my desk, holding out my luckless effusion between his finger and thumb. My writing was stroked through from end to end, and underneath was written, "'Brevity is the soul of wit," but I object to absolute nonsense.—L.' I was deeply hurt, but the lesson sank in, and I never again 'dashed off' a draft."

"But Lord Lyons was a kind chief, was he not?"

"Kind is not quite the word. He was the best chief that a young man could serve under. To him the whole of life was a duty. Where pleasure warred with duty it had to give way, so that as far as business was concerned he sometimes had occasion to be harsh; but the feeling that he was invariably in the right, however irksome his decisions, quickly gained for him the respect of every subordinate who served under him, and as time went on I think that there was hardly any who left him whose affections he had not gained. As far as I myself am concerned, I know that whatever

success I achieved in after life was due to the lessons which I had learnt from him on the conduct of business, and, I will add, on the conduct of life. It was my good fortune to be on his staff from 1862 to 1871 at Washington, Constantinople, and Paris. Those were the years of my diplomatic education."

"Did he differ from other chiefs in the power of impressing those under him?"

"Yes, widely. He was unmarried, and found pleasure in the company of his secretaries. We dined with him every night, and though of a shy nature and little given to expansion in conversation, he encouraged it in us, controlled its tone, and always put in the necessary corrective where our youthful enthusiasm betrayed us into absurdities of thought or expression. One day allusion was made to the assault on Marshal Haynau, the Austrian general, who was reputed to have flogged women during the Hungarian rebellion. He was brutally attacked in 1850 in London by brewers' draymen and cruelly beaten. The subject was talked about at dinner, and one of

the secretaries took the part of the draymen on the plea of 'served him right.' Lord Lyons struck in quickly, 'Do not attempt,' he said, 'to find an excuse for an act which was a national disgrace.'"

"It is very easy," said Whiffles, "to snub those who are under you."

"It is, and if it is a habit with a chief it loses consideration; but if, as in Lord Lyons' case, it is hardly ever resorted to, and only in cases in which he felt strongly, it has a very salutary effect, especially as we all knew that his judgment was unerring."

"It must be a comfort to serve under a chief about whom you have that feeling."

"Yes, but it is very rare. In my experience Lord Lyons was the only one who was entitled to it. Yet it was at the expense of other qualities. His mind was so judicial that he could never lean to the sentimental side. He understood human weaknesses and treated them with a humorous and kindly banter, but he never shared them. What we term, for the want of a better expression, the pleasures of the world were all irksome to him.

He encountered them from a sense of duty, but the natural shyness of his nature hindered his taking any pleasure in them. To this, however, there was a very decided and charming exception. He was always perfectly at ease in his own house. He was princely in his hospitality, and undoubtedly enjoyed dispensing it, and when guests were with him he would take a studied care to be civil to each."

"He was a good Ambassador?"

"He was invaluable to our Government. The public little knows what an inappreciable boon it is to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to have representatives at the great foreign courts on whose judgment he can rely. Instructions are all very well, but they deal with the general lines of policy; the success of their execution hinges on the tact, discretion, and judgment of the agent. When Lord Lyons, in defiance of his instructions in the Mason and Slidell case, gave the United States Government twelve more hours than the allotted term for breaking off relations he saved his country from war."

"How was that?"

"Well, it was very simple. Unless the United States Government consented to surrender Slidell and Mason by the evening of a certain day Lord Lyons was directed to break off relations and leave the country. The clock struck the hour, the surrender was refused, but Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, said to Lord Lyons, 'Give me twelve hours more.' Lord Lyons consented. During those twelve hours, from six in the evening to six in the morning, William H. Seward, all honour be to him, wrestled with his colleagues and overcame them. At six on the following morning Lord Lyons received a message to say that the Confederate envoys would be given up."

"His action," said Whiffles, "does not appear to me as being specially brilliant or meritorious—surely he could not have acted otherwise."

"Ungenerous ruffian," I cried (no question of Whiffles with or without the Mr. this time). "Wait till you find yourself a responsible agent in an acute crisis, when peace or war depend upon your action, when the path of safety for yourself

lies in obeying your instructions, when nothing can excuse you for deviating from them but ultimate success, and when that success depends upon whether your own judgment shall prove to have been right or wrong. Then gird your loins and make up your mind, and see whether it is a light thing to do. This great game of controlling or letting loose the dogs of war often falls into the hands of diplomatists for immediate solution. When they are successful in keeping them in hand the world remains ignorant of the calamities which they have been spared, and gives scant praise to the man to whom they owe their escape, yet were it given to us to see things in their true light we should raise a statue to Lord Lyons as freely as we do to the successful commander who comes into action after the diplomatist has failed."

CHAPTER II

SOME DIPLOMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

"I SUPPOSE you yourself have had trying moments?" inquired Whiffles. "Did the sense of responsibility to which you referred just now weigh upon you?"

"I am loth to talk about myself."

"I am here to make you do it," said Whiffles. "Tell me at once whether you sent it to the winds or were paralysed by it."

"Well," I said, and I felt as if the words were wrung from me like a corkscrew drawing a cork, "up to a certain time of my life the sense of responsibility was entirely absent. Of course in earlier days there was no call for it. I was for years engaged in simply obeying orders, and when the time came for, as we may say, acting to some extent off my own bat, the thought of responsibility never seemed to occur to me, only I must go a little deeper into the matter to explain it.

There are two distinct feelings involved in the question of the sense of responsibility. The one is, what will be the result to the matter which you have in hand; the other is, the result which the decision which you take will have upon yourself. The latter is the rock on which men are wrecked when it comes to be said of them that they failed through shrinking from responsibility. Until the last dozen years of my career this consideration never presented itself to me."

"Why?"

"Because I was absolutely indifferent about myself. I had my heart in my work, no personal considerations came into play. Whatever the magnitude of the matter in hand, its circumstances alone engaged my attention. But this again hinges on other springs of action, all so personal that I had much rather leave them alone."

"On the contrary, you may become interesting for the first time."

"The first twenty-five years of my grown-up life gave me no particular pleasure. It was a matter of indifference to me whether it came to an end

officially or physically. I was nearly always cheerful and seldom unhappy, yet I never felt the joy of existence as I have seen it in others. The constant routine of daily work, from which I foresaw that there was no escape but the close of my career, made me often wish that this might come. I lacked strength of individuality to break through my surroundings. My time was passed in accommodating myself to circumstances and endeavouring to make the best of them. By a strange piece of luck which I never appreciated, till distance lent its enchantment to the view, the work at all my posts happened to be difficult and incessant. War seemed to dog my footsteps; this began in 1860, when I was at Parana, the capital of the Argentine Confederation. While I was there General Urquiza made war on the National forces; next I was at Washington during the war between North and South; then, at Constantinople from 1865 to 1867 the effort to tide war off never relaxed. From there I went to Paris, and remained to the end of the Franco-German War and the Commune. Then I went to Pekin, where I found rest; but in

two years I was back in Europe, where the diplomatic air was ever rumbling with the coming strife, which at length broke out in the Balkan Peninsula and ended in the Russo-Turkish War. At its close I was sent to Constantinople, and becoming Minister Plenipotentiary in the absence of the Ambassador, I had about the hardest work which ever fell to my lot in inducing the Porte to carry out the terms of the Treaty of Berlin. No sooner was I relieved of that than I was sent to Egypt. My mission there ceased with its occupation, and I fell into quiet waters at last, when I was appointed Minister at Brussels in 1883."

"You have hardly explained why during all these years you were free from the spectre of responsibility."

"Yes I have; I told you that my mind was always on my work, not on myself; and, as I have already said, I was indifferent. Life seemed to me to have so few attractions, unless one discarded duty, that it was immaterial to one's own happiness whether it went on or not; but I had a formula which stood me in very good stead—I had my

eye on those around who were ill or unhappy, and contrasted their lot with mine. What others can bear, I said to myself, I can bear, for I have health and strength, and in the moments of the greatest depression I would brace myself with this reflection."

"And what brought about the loss of this self-indifference?"

"I married, and the whole scene changed—life was no more a dreary waste. The knowledge that another was concerned in the success of my action at once invested it with the microbe of anxiety. I will give you an illustration to explain the difference between the before and after. I went to Alexandria immediately after the massacres, and took up my quarters at an hotel in the centre of the town. Arabi, the leader of the National party, was practically master of the city. I was the only foreign representative who was determined to uphold the authority of the Khedive, come what might. Our Government received private intelligence that I was such an embarrassment to the conspirators that it was intended to make away with me, and Lord Granville telegraphed to me that he wished

me, for my own safety, to move to some house on the quay, where a boat from one of H.M.'s ships would be in attendance and take me off in case of need. I, on the other hand, felt that it was impossible for me to take this step without causing a general panic in the European population, and I telegraphed back to this effect, adding, 'Pray do not be anxious about me, I am certain to pull through.' Now, had I been married at that time, I feel pretty certain that I should have done what was suggested, sheltered from the consequences which might follow, by my instructions from home. Mind, I do not wish to generalise. I do not insinuate that all married men are less fit for responsibility than bachelors. I only desire to illustrate the change which came over me personally after the blessed moment arrived when I had begun to feel that life was worth living."

"Rather unlucky that you should have developed a dread of responsibility just at the moment when you had got to the top of the ladder; it must have impaired your usefulness when you had most need to show it."

"The word 'dread' does not come in. It is not necessary that a thing should be a nightmare because you feel it—but let that pass. I put it down to your hasty way of speaking. With regard to my being less efficient than before, I will say that at that time I had emerged from the diplomatic breakers which had been heavy round me hitherto. There is an extraordinary difference between the staid and ceremonious atmosphere of civilised courts and the turbulent and volcanic condition of the East. In Berlin I had to do with those whose ways and thoughts sprang from an education similar to our own. If we differed, the arguments on either side were lucid to the intelligence of both—give and take—the finding of a mean was the object of both in all questions of dispute—calm heads and calm reasoning turn darkness into light in diplomatic controversy."

"You preferred the lilies and languor of the North to the roses and rapture of the East."

"There was not much languor in German policy during the eleven years I was at Berlin. No

empire ever made more rapid advance in the same space of time."

"To our detriment!"

"In that phrase you make yourself the mouth-piece of a narrow-minded section of insular thought. It is a singular thing that, while we English, of all nations of the world, have recognised and experienced the enormous advantage to progress which comes from competition in every branch of our internal development, we cannot bring our minds to view the competition of other nations as destined to produce the same progress for the benefit of the world, and to welcome it as a further incentive to our own action and as a preventive to our going to sleep. There is no question that the rapid advance of Germany has given us a rude and healthy shaking, and that we owe to it a great part of our own progress in recent years."

"I fancy you would have some difficulty in proving the correctness of that view before an English audience."

"I will put it broadly. Look at a map of Africa published before 1885, and compare it with a map

of to-day. You will see that vast tracts of territory in the east, west, and south have been added, I will not say to the British dominions, but certainly to British dominion—there is not a square foot of these additions to our territorial influence which has not been sanctioned by treaty or agreement, and most of these have been due to the initiative of Germany. Prince Bismarck called together the Congo Conference—it confirmed to us the basin of the Niger. In Count Caprivi's time we acquired by agreement with Germany the protectorate of Zanzibar, and the sphere of British influence which extends to the head waters of the Nile, and we agreed upon the boundaries of the British territories, including Rhodesia in the south."

"These were all only paper tracings."

"No doubt. But the activity of the Germans redoubled ours, and if the regions which came under our influence were, as you say, merely bounded by paper tracings, still their development has begun, and its progress is due to the healthy competition which Germany has forced upon us. To what do we owe the alacrity with which our

House of Commons has voted every increase in the estimates of the Navy, which successive Governments in late years have proposed? Has it not been due to the growth of foreign colonial aspirations, the chief and most engrossing being German? No, Mr. Whiffles, say what you may, the progress of the German Empire has been most beneficial to us. It has stimulated our energies and raised us from a state of dangerous torpor."

"In fact, the Germans have been our best friends! You will at least allow that it was in disguise."

"A stimulant is useful, whether it be bitter or sweet."

"I suspect that you are prejudiced; the negotiations for all these treaties and agreements fell in a great part to you. You regard the outcome in a great part as your offspring."

"It would be absurd for me to feel that. The initiative lay in each case with Her Majesty's Government. I merely acted on instructions, but I should certainly be glad if it could be remembered in history that I signed the documents which con-

veyed these vast acquisitions to the responsibilities and the grandeur of the Crown."

"If it is remembered you may thank me for it."

I raised my hand, and gave Mr. Whiffles a military salute.

"Perhaps you think we owe Egypt to you too," he said bitinglly.

"Not at all. When I was appointed to Cairo, in 1879, Lord Salisbury said to me, 'Remember that you will never have anything to back you, whatever may be your difficulties, but moral support.' During the whole of my mission I never had any doubt that intervention was the one thing which both the Conservative Government, and the Liberal Government which succeeded it, desired to avoid. My instructions were invariably and continuously, 'Save us from being obliged to intervene with force'!"

"Then you made a pretty hash of your instructions."

This rude but apt remark somewhat paralysed me. I remained silent for a space, and then said deprecatingly—

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will."

But Whiffles was not to be pacified. "It is no uncommon thing," he said, "for men to attribute the responsibility for their failures to the Deity. So let me tell you once for all that the Deity does not accept it."

"Perhaps," I said, "He is more generous with regard to their successes."

"You say that sarcastically," he retorted, "but you happen to have hit upon the truth. Take the life of any man as a whole, and you will find that it has been successful in an equal ratio with his observance of the cardinal virtues. Those who follow the divine precepts succeed, those who fall away from them fail. Their failure is the result of their own perversity or want of steadfastness. I will descend to a mundane illustration. The Secretary of State sends you instructions. He is not responsible for the miscarriage of the business, if it is due to your deviating from them; on the other hand, the credit remains with him if success is achieved in consequence of your strict obedience

to his orders. I am quite accurate in saying that the Deity is responsible for man's successes, but not for his failures."

"It is a formula," I said, "and, as is the case of most attempts of this kind, the box will not hold the luggage you are trying to cram into it. Did you ever hear the story of the Dodo and the Catamaran? No? I am not going to tell it you; the point is that it has nothing to do with the task in hand, so that it resembles the little homily you have been pleased to inflict on me."

"Pining to get back to the thread? Take it up."

"It is not worth while, the personal question is absorbed in the result. I only wish to record that if we are in Egypt now it is in spite of the desire and the settled policy of the successive Governments in power during the events which culminated in our intervention and present occupation. The broad lines are clear. The Khedive Ismail governed Egypt on the system of his ancestors. He was his own judge of what was right and wrong, and when in his opinion his subjects did wrong, he tried, judged, and, if he

SAW good, executed them—only instead of making public examples on these occasions he had resort to Oriental methods, and people who were in any way dangerous to him died suddenly. He might have pursued his system without being interfered with during his natural lifetime, but it happened that in order to obtain funds for his public works, his pleasures, and his extravagances he borrowed money in the European markets. As soon as it became clear that bankruptcy was imminent the Powers foreclosed, dismissed the Khedive, and took possession of the financial administration of Egypt. A new era under their tutelage was inaugurated. The young Khedive was to govern according to civilised methods. All the troubles which followed would have been obviated if the Powers had taken over the military administration at the same time. As it was, they inflicted upon a Mahommedan State European taskmasters, without the armed force at their back which was the only means of thrusting a belief in their permanency on the native mind. The lesson has had its practical effect. The French did not forget

it when they took possession of Tunis, and it has been brought home to us that we can only maintain tranquillity in Egypt by the display of military power. In Europe, Reason is still to some extent a goddess. When completely unveiled, Powers will still bow down before her; but in Oriental countries she may display her charms like Phryne, and yet not move a living creature. Force there alone has power which comes home to the native intelligence. When the Egyptian rebellion took proportions which made it a menace to the existing institutions and to the lives of Europeans, it was a wise, legitimate, and apparently safe policy for two of the greatest Powers of Europe to intervene. The joint intervention, had its realisation not been frustrated at the last moment, would have caused the national movement to collapse, and the landing of troops and the occupation of the country would never have become necessary. Arabi would have bit the dust before Great Britain and France together. The moment the defection of our ally was clear, two consequences at once resulted; first, the absolute decrease by half of the invading force;

and secondly, the belief that the loss of our ally would prevent us from pushing matters to the extreme. The vote of the French Parliament was taken to indicate a European revolt against the measures threatened, which would find its echo in our policy, and the Egyptian insurgents redoubled their aggressiveness in the hope of promoting our hesitation. They counted without their host. Deeply as we deplored the loss of the participation of France, we felt that we had gone too far to draw back, and we carried to the end the task which we had hoped would have been rendered unnecessary by the threat of the joint action of the two great Powers. We went to Egypt without having wished it, so the next idea was to get out of it as soon as we could."

"I think that statement is rather too sweeping," said Whiffles. "I remember no signs of a wish to quit."

"Perhaps it was not manifest, but it must have been the design of the Government, otherwise it is impossible to account for their action. The French officials in Egypt expected that their

participation in the government would cease at once. The dual system was the outcome of the joint rivalry of the two Governments to obtain an ascendancy in Egypt. They one day resolved to sink their differences and to work together. English and French officials were appointed side by side in every department. I well remember a French gentleman in high office saying to me on our re-entry into Cairo at the close of the rebellion, 'To you the spoils of the victor; through our own fault you have conquered us as well as Egypt. We must resign ourselves to the lot of the vanquished.'

"To my mind our action at the close of the war is proof positive that our Government still held the view that it was not to our advantage to be in Egypt, and that, as circumstances which they could not control had brought us there, our wise course was to arrange matters in such a manner as to afford us the best prospect of being able to leave it as soon as possible. We continued nearly all the French Administrators in their posts, and we maintained the Chamber. Had it been

our intention to remain permanently, it is obvious that we should have put an end to the dual administration, which would have been accepted by France at that time as a natural sequence to events, and we should have dissolved the native Chamber, whose only province must infallibly be to criticise and hamper our administration."

"Stop a moment. There is something wrong in your argument. You say that we did not intend to remain, and you adduce as evidence our continuance of a Chamber—which could never have any result but the creation of difficulties. Is not the contention of bad faith on our part founded on the reproach that the difficulties which we experience are of our own creation, and that when we gave Egypt a constitution it was because it was foreseen that it would not work and that therefore we should never be able to quit?"

"Possibly, but those who think so must be unacquainted with the spirit which animates a Liberal Government. Liberty is their watchword, and because, in the attainment of this precious boon, our constitution has been victorious at home,

they consider it to be the panacea for all ills. In conferring one upon Egypt they honestly believed that they were doing the best they could for the country, and they undoubtedly took the course which was popular with the masses at home. It would have been impossible for a Liberal Cabinet to establish the form of domination in Egypt which would have really enabled us to quit it safely in a few years, because that form must have embraced a single British Administration with despotic power, and to have done this would have been equivalent to hauling down the colours under which the Liberal party has grown and flourished."

"Are you Liberal or Conservative?"

"Your thought is, 'Were you Liberal or Conservative?' I can honestly say that during the whole time that I was in the service I had no politics. I followed the instructions of my chief with absolute loyalty, to whichever party he might belong. This is the duty of every public servant, his honesty and trustworthiness depend upon his observing it."

"There must have been plenty of instances

within your knowledge of diplomatists with strong party feeling?"

"Not in the regular line. There have been cases of men who have been pitchforked into the service through party influence, but I cannot remember one that was not a rocket."

"Give me a few instances."

"Thank you! Let me remind you of your promise—'I will ask you no question to which the answer can possibly give offence to any living soul.'"

"But the dead ones——?"

"They may have relations."

"If you do not speak ill of anyone the public will find your reminiscences are somewhat dull."

"I am sorry, but I prefer being dull to amusing my readers at the expense of people who can no longer defend themselves."

"That does not hold good in regard to the living."

"The motive is the same—a work in book form abides. If it contains statements detrimental to people's character, the only course open to them or

their friends is to write to the newspapers or to bring an action at law. Both modes are fleeting and quickly forgotten, whereas the book, if it be interesting, will pass through many editions, and the libels will last as long as copies of it are extant. The cases of reputations which have been unjustly, yet irretrievably, tarnished in this way are innumerable. I am not going to add to the number."

"Do not get on stilts. Let us change the subject."

"As you like," I replied, somewhat drily, for I was simmering with ill-disguised annoyance at what I considered to be an attempt to catch me unawares.

CHAPTER III

IN EGYPT, ETC., 1879-1882

"**N**OW," resumed Whiffles, "let us talk of a man about whom nobody ever had an ill word to say. You must have known General Gordon in Egypt?"

"He was Governor of the Soudan when I went to Egypt, and I made his acquaintance when he finally resigned the post and passed a short time at Cairo on his way home in the summer of 1880. He was unlike anybody else whom I have ever known. His thoughts and ways seemed always to be at war with received usages and conventionalities. Even the ordinary questions of life appeared to assume a different aspect to him from that which they present to other people, while the greater questions were treated by him from an ideal standpoint unattainable by others, and from which he himself could only work when he was in supreme

command. He was endowed with the qualities which we ascribe to heroes of romance and history, whose human frailties, if they had any, are obliterated by the bright traditions of their deeds.

"He came to see me a day or two after his arrival at Cairo. We discussed the topics of the day, and his retirement from the governorship of the Soudan. He said he had left it for good; that as long as the K'hedive Ismail reigned he had had a free hand, but that since the new régime he had been interfered with, and that he must govern according to his own views or not at all. Then, breaking off, he said, 'I have brought you a little present,' and taking from his pocket a filigree silver box which might serve as a cigarette case he handed it to me, adding, 'It is Soudan work.' I was embarrassed and somewhat annoyed. It had been part of my education, from childhood up, not to accept presents, and I had adhered to the rule as rigorously as possible during my residence in the East. I felt besides that I had never seen General Gordon before, so that the present could not be regarded as a token of friendship or

affection. I told him that I was very much obliged to him, but that I hoped he would excuse me if I did not take it—that I had made it a rule never to accept presents, and that it was not like accepting a trifle from an old friend, as I now had the pleasure of making his acquaintance for the first time. He, however, continued to press the little box upon me with an earnestness out of proportion to the subject, saying that he had brought it for me and that he wished me to have it. At last I said laughingly that if he desired me to have it so much, the only way I saw to satisfy him was that I should buy it, thinking that by this proposal I should put an end to his insistence, but he at once consented. I asked him what it was worth. He replied, 'Three pounds.' I happened to have three English sovereigns in my pocket. I gave them to him and kept the box, to which I now attach a special value on account of its coming from him, and because of the strange way in which it became mine. The transaction created no lessening of cordiality in our talk, and on his rising to go, I told him that a few friends were to dine with me next day, and that I

hoped he would come also. He excused himself on the ground that dinner parties were not in his line, and that he never went to them if he could possibly avoid it.

"On the following evening, therefore, I was somewhat surprised when, after my other guests had assembled and we were going into dinner, the door again opened and the servant announced 'His Excellency Gordon Pacha.' He merely told me that he had changed his mind, and I should have been altogether glad had it not made us thirteen."

"I should hardly have thought that you were superstitious," put in Whiffles.

"I am not," I replied.

"Then why did you object to being thirteen?"

"Because more than twelve people cannot be properly served by a single service. For any number over twelve there ought to be a double service, and if you have a double service you may as well have twenty-four people. It will not materially increase the cost. This is a point in domestic economy which a man speedily learns

when he has to entertain on a salary which is inadequate to his expenses."

"That is the best reason that I have heard for not asking thirteen to dinner."

"Yes, I have gathered from remarks which you have let drop that you are not of this world, so the point would not strike you; but I can give you a still better reason. You invite your guests, presumably to be pleasant to them and to have a cheerful party. If you sit down thirteen you may be quite sure that there will be some among them who will greatly dislike it. In an accidental collection of thirteen guests a few are certain to be superstitious. Their gloom will be catching, and your dinner will be a failure; that reason will appeal to you better than the one founded on the *res angusta domi*.

"A few days after this General Gordon gave me a far greater surprise. He came to me one morning and told me that he intended to call out Nubar Pacha. The announcement somewhat took away my breath—the fact of a man of his character wishing to fight a duel seemed to me impossible,

and that he should speak about it to me, who was the Queen's representative at Cairo, seemed even more incongruous and astonishing. I found, however, that he was quite in earnest. On the previous evening he had been at Nubar Pacha's house, which was a rendezvous for people who wished to see each other in a pleasant social circle—Nubar Pacha did not hold office at that time, but he saw a good deal of company. It appears that in the course of the evening a discussion had arisen in which Nubar Pacha had let fall some words disparaging to my predecessor, Mr. Vivian. I should add that this might perfectly well take place without any loss to Mr. Vivian's reputation, for the political occurrences which preceded his promotion to another post were of so many-sided a character that it was a case of *quot homines tot sententiae*, nor was it possible for me at first to understand why General Gordon should rush so ardently into the fray. I argued with him on the above lines, saying that after all Mr. Vivian was here in a public capacity, and that I could really see no reason why the General should take up so

seriously a passing remark, for all officials must submit to criticism. 'But,' said General Gordon, 'Vivian is a C.B. and I am a C.B. too, I will not permit anyone to speak in such a way of a man who belongs to the same Order of Knighthood as I do—Nubar Pacha shall apologise to me or fight.'

"This was Gordon all over. He had the spirit of another age in him. He was a Paladin impelled by a vicarious chivalry to do battle for his whole order.

"In the few words I have here set down he breathed the speech of Talbot in *Henry VI.*:—

'When first this order was ordain'd, my Lords
Knights of the Garter were of noble birth ;
Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage,
Such as were grown to credit by the wars ;
Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress,
But always resolute in most extremes.
He then that is not furnished in this sort
Doth but usurp the sacred name of knight,
Profaning this most honourable order,
And should, if I were worthy to be judge,
Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain
That doth presume to boast of gentle blood.'

"The matter gave me a great deal of trouble, for it fell upon me to obtain from Nubar Pacha the reparation which General Gordon required. At first the Pacha was very angry and refused to give any explanation, and it was only after repeated efforts that I was able to obtain from him a statement that he never had the slightest intention of attacking Mr. Vivian's honour, and that if his words had been capable of this interpretation he withdrew them and expressed his regret.

"General Gordon left Egypt, and the next time I saw him was when he accompanied Lord Ripon to India. In my official capacity I travelled with the new Viceroy by rail from Alexandria to Suez. Gordon was going out as Lord Ripon's Private Secretary, and, as we were whirling along, he proposed to me to come into an empty compartment and have a chat. We talked over the post which he had accepted, and from what he said I was not surprised when he resigned a month or two afterwards; it was impossible for him in the subordinate capacity of Secretary to make his views prevail, and his impatience of restraint acted

as it had in the Soudan, and made him throw up the appointment. After we had chatted for some time he said suddenly, 'Do you remember, when I first saw you at Cairo, your refusing to accept a little silver box from me which I had brought with me as a present for you from the Soudan?'

"'Yes,' I said, 'I am very sorry that you should remember it too, if the incident made a disagreeable impression upon you. I hoped that I explained my reasons sufficiently for that not to be the case.'

"'You were quite wrong to refuse it,' he said. 'I had also brought for you a very fine suit of Damascene armour, which you did not get because you refused the little box.'

"'But I did not refuse it altogether,' I urged in mitigation, 'for I bought it and have got it now.'

"'Never mind,' he rejoined, 'you would not take it as a present from me. Will you take one now?' With that he drew from his pocket a small discoloured ivory pocket-knife. 'Look at this,' he said, 'it belonged to Lord Clyde. He had it with him during the Indian Mutiny, and he scratched his initials on it, "C. C." Will you accept it?'

" 'Certainly,' I replied, 'with the greatest possible pleasure.'

" 'Ah!' he said with a sort of sigh of relief, 'now I am satisfied; you have got something from me!'

" The last time I saw him was at Brussels, where I had been appointed Minister. He had come to an arrangement with the King of the Belgians to go out as Governor of the Congo, and it is deeply to be regretted that he did not do so instead of returning to the Soudan. When he was starting for Egypt I wrote to congratulate him, and he replied full of hope, and said at the end of his letter that he thanked me for my good wishes, and that he had prayed for me for a long time. I believe that he often showed his regard in this way. His whole life was a strange admixture of religion, chivalry, mysticism, and the spirit of an anchorite. When he insisted upon my receiving something from him, it must have been with the conviction that in some way it would have a magnetic influence upon me."

" Did it?" said Whiffles, with a disagreeable abruptness.

I hesitated, and was fain to answer "No"; but as I said this the feeling came over me that I was speaking hastily. I remembered that, over and over again, I had looked at the filigree box, and at Lord Clyde's pocket-knife; that I had never done so without thinking of Gordon, and though I would not acknowledge it to Whiffles, I felt that I could not deny a mystic relation between the little inanimate objects which I treasured and the high ideals which were the lessons of General Gordon's life.

There was a pause. Then Whiffles said, "Was it not somewhat churlish and bombastic of you to refuse General Gordon's little present when you first saw him?"

"Certainly not," I replied, "for I am sure that it is not in my nature to be the one or the other; but as you seem to like being rude, why did you not say 'silly,' it would go nearer hitting the mark, and to prevent its being thought, I will explain that my early education mixed itself up in the matter. From my childhood's days I had been taught to refuse presents, my mother had the point at heart. She

would admit of no compromise. Her view was that if I took small presents as a child, I might take bigger ones as I grew older. Once crossing to Calais, when I was about six years of age, a gentleman, who was an entire stranger to us, took notice of my brother and me as we ran about the deck regardless of the roughness of the sea, and on nearing harbour he gave us half a sovereign apiece for not being sea-sick. As soon as our mother emerged from her cabin we told her what had happened with some pride, but she insisted on our immediately returning the money to the donor. Without I hope being quixotic about it or rigid out of place, the feeling impressed by this early education has remained with me.

"One of the hardest tussles I ever had in endeavouring to refuse a present was when I left Constantinople in 1879, after having been Minister Plenipotentiary there. The Sultan had the generous habit of making parting gifts. He had always treated me with kindness and distinction, but I was particularly anxious to go to my new post at Cairo without having been a recipient of any

tangible mark of His Majesty's favour. So I took the imperial chief dragoman into my confidence, and told him that I hoped that on the occasion of my taking leave His Majesty would not make me a present, as I should find myself in the embarrassing position of refusing it. My farewell audience took place. The Sultan was most cordial and offered me nothing. I congratulated myself on escaping from Constantinople clean-handed. But the night before I was to embark for Alexandria I received a message from the palace to say that His Majesty desired to see me next morning on my way to the steamer. All my anxieties revived. I felt that the Sultan could only wish to see me again for one purpose, and on entering the waiting-room of the palace, where I was received by the chief dragoman, I reminded him of the conversation I had had with him. I urged that I was not permitted by regulations to accept presents, and I said that I could not go to His Majesty without being previously assured that I should not be put through the painful ordeal of having to tell His Majesty in so many words that his generosity was

unacceptable. The dragoman's face grew longer and longer. He said the Sultan was waiting for me. I replied that I should sit where I was till he had delivered the message, and that mindful of His Majesty's constant kindness to me I relied upon his forbearance towards me in this instance. The dragoman, seeing I was obstinate, departed, and remained away for half an hour. On returning he said that the Sultan had quite understood the hint which I had previously given, and that in consequence he had, on the occasion of my farewell audience, refrained from bestowing upon me the mark of his regard which he had intended, but that he could not let me leave Constantinople without a slight souvenir from him, and therefore he proposed to give me a set of studs which he had been in the habit of wearing himself, the value of which was not more than fifteen pounds, and that he was sure that I should be misinterpreting the intention of any rules which might exist if I were to refuse to receive them. I was beat. It was obvious that I should be making a mountain of a molehill if I persisted. I passed into the

Sultan's presence, and came away with a little set of diamond studs and sleeve-links, which are, I suspect, of somewhat greater value than the imperial dragoman had said.

"Three years afterwards I had again to contend in regard to receiving a present, and I do not mind confessing to you that on this occasion I was a little half-hearted, for it was a more serious matter. Arabi's rebellion had been crushed by Lord Wolseley and the British Army. The Khedive had been reinstated in his good city of Cairo. He did me the honour to say that he owed his continued existence as Khedive in a great measure to me, and to mark his gratitude he desired to bestow upon me a palace. I went to see it, and came away with a heavy heart. It was just the kind of house I should have loved—a wide staircase, great lofty rooms, a magnificent bath, and large gardens full of waving palms—an Arabian Night's entertainment.

"In reporting the offer to Lord Granville I said that, for many reasons, I thought it would be better that I should not be authorised by Her

Majesty's Government to accept it, and, notwithstanding that I could expect no other reply, I own to a passing feeling of chagrin when his Lordship informed me that Her Majesty's Government entirely agreed with me.

"And this reminds me that, having told you all I have to tell of General Gordon, a hero whose name was a household word, I should like to tell you of another whom I learned to know intimately during the three years and a half that I was in Egypt, and who died afterwards unobtrusively, without having obtained the recognition which his qualities merited."

"Let him pass. The world moves too quickly to take interest in people who live and die unobtrusively."

"A hero is a hero whether trumpets proclaim it or not, but I acknowledge their efficacy—so let me strike a note which I feel sure will find an echo in the hearts of all who had to deal with the gentle, straightforward, and loyal Khedive against whom Arabi raised the standard of rebellion. His early death was a grave misfortune to his people and to

us, for he was a man without guile and without fear. His heroism was not patent to the public because it did not display itself in daring acts or bold decisions, but if a steadfast desire to do what is right, an enlightened mind, a perfect equanimity under the severest trials, and a fearlessness of consequences inspired by a blameless conscience may be accounted heroism, he deserved his title to it during the dark days which preceded the Alexandria massacres—though why a riot in which some fifty people were killed should attain this dignified name I do not know."

"Of course," said Whiffles, "we always call cases in which Christians are killed by Mahommedans 'massacres.' How else can we arouse the proper Christian indignation?"

"Well, during that time for weeks the Khedive's life hung upon a thread. I did my utmost to obtain the permission of Her Majesty's Government to allow him to go to Alexandria, where the presence of foreign men-of-war would have ensured his safety, but it was resolutely refused, and with pain in my heart I told the Khedive he must not leave Cairo.

It was the only time in my life that I could not sleep at night. The dread feeling was always on me that I should hear in the morning that the Khedive had been murdered, and I felt that if this came about it would be the result of our refusal to allow him to leave. We used to talk over it quite quietly together. He said, 'It does not signify to me personally. Our religion prevents us from having any fear of death; but it is different with our women. I never go into my harem till three or four in the morning; I cannot face my poor wife and all the women. To them you know life is everything—their existence ends here—they cry and wail and fall at my feet and implore me to save them.'

"The news of the riots reached Cairo on the evening of the day on which they occurred, and I telegraphed to our Government to say that the Khedive ought to go at once to Alexandria. Next evening an answer came from Lord Granville telling me that if the Khedive desired to go I was not to hinder him from doing so. I quickly found means of letting the Khedive know that I had received this instruction. Within half an hour I received

a summons to the palace, and the Khedive told me that in consequence of the occurrences on the previous day he had decided to go to Alexandria on the following morning. I said that no objection would be raised by Her Majesty's Government to his doing so.

"The Khedive left next morning in a special train. His ministers came to the palace, and to the surprise of those around him the Khedive desired Arabi Pacha, who was Minister of War, to get into his carriage and to go with him. It is not too much to say that at that time Arabi was openly conspiring to take away the Khedive's power, if not his life, and it was the general belief for the moment, though to my mind it was a false one, that he had instigated the riot. It therefore struck everyone with surprise to see the Khedive drive through the streets to the station with Arabi at his side. It was indeed a bold but wise act on the part of the Khedive to take him with him. If he had gone to Alexandria, and Arabi had remained at Cairo, the Chief of the State and the National Party would then and there have parted company for

good, but the Khedive in his quiet wisdom never lost sight of the patriotic view of his duties. When the moment came for the bombardment of Alexandria he happily refused to take shelter on board our men-of-war, saying that his lot lay with his people."

"But he went off to his palace at Ramleh."

"It would have been silly of him to remain at the palace of Ras-et-Tin, which is on the water just behind the forts to be bombarded. It was his simple duty to provide as he could for the safety of his family and himself—but remember that in refusing to go on board our ships he cut himself adrift from every support but that of Providence. He was Khedive in nothing but the name, the whole power had passed into the hands of the rebels, and his chances of escape were hardly greater than those of a martyr in a Roman arena before the wild beasts were uncaged."

"That is going rather far in statement."

"Perhaps it is. They did not send wild beasts to tear him in pieces, only a captain and his company with orders to despatch him. The wit and

presence of mind of the Khedive changed what was intended to be the supreme tragedy of the revolution into a comedy. He saw the band of soldiers coming towards the Palace. When they arrived, prepared for resistance and intending to break in the doors, they found the Aide-de-camp of the Khedive at the foot of the great staircase. He met them civilly, told them that the Khedive was expecting them, and that he had orders to conduct them at once to His Highness's presence. Half sobered by this unexpected reception they mounted the grand staircase, and were ushered into the presence of the man they were sent to murder, who stood alone, calm and unmoved in the centre of the great reception hall. He at once addressed them, telling them that he knew the errand on which they had come, but that before they carried out their instructions, like every man who was condemned to die, he had a right to speak. To this they agreed, and he proceeded to explain the situation to them with a quiet good sense which won their attention. He told them that in the long run the greater power must conquer; that as matters stood

he had the pledge of the English to maintain him as Khedive, but that if he no longer existed they would be likely to take the country for themselves; that therefore from a patriotic point of view they had better let him live. After descanting for some length in this strain he proceeded to play his best card. He told the officer in charge that he would at once raise him in rank and confer upon him the order of the Medjidieh, while with regard to the soldiers who had accompanied him, he would appoint them to be his personal bodyguard at that moment, as they might have already perceived he was very much in want of soldiers. And so it fell about that the little band which had come to kill remained to bless.

"Two months later I accompanied the Khedive on his return to Cairo. At the railway station he was received by the Duke of Connaught and Lord Wolseley. We got into a well-equipped landau with postilions and outriders, and drove through the streets lined with British troops to the Palace. The Khedive received a warm welcome from his own people, who thronged the pavement in dense

masses along the whole line of the procession. He was deeply moved. I could see the tears standing in his eyes, and I felt that I was in much the same plight. All that passed through his mind may easily be conceived. For him the long night had been turned to day. My emotion sprang from different thoughts. The British uniform on either side made the blood leap through my veins.

"From what I have told you, you will acknowledge that the Khedive showed well in adversity. But now the trials were over, and I was somewhat anxious lest the Oriental traditions of the victor towards the vanquished might not come out in his character. You will perhaps remember that the question of Arabi's trial excited a great deal of feeling at home. A not unnatural fear existed that a trial by court-martial would be held, a sentence rushed, and Arabi shot as soon as power was re-established at Cairo. I so far shared this feeling that I considered it to be my first duty to turn my attention to this question. Though I could but acknowledge that Arabi merited death, in so far as that is the usual lot of unsuccessful rebels when

they fall into the hands of the sovereign against whom they conspire, I also felt that the Khedive would gain more by sparing him than by executing him. It was for his sake, and not for Arabi's, that I urged leniency. The Khedive, somewhat to my disappointment, said that he could give me no assurance. He was ready to appoint English officers on the court-martial, but he thought the proper course was for the trial to take place, and to await the result. He was no doubt right. It would have impaired his position if, without consulting his ministers, he had told them that he had decided to spare Arabi's life. It would at once have been understood that he was acting under English advice, or rather coercion, and he would have lost prestige.

"In the meantime an agitation for a public trial, at which British barristers were to defend Arabi, had been growing at home. The spirit of public inquiry, which has over and over again done such healthy service, led to the desire that the whole of the circumstances which had brought about the rebellion should be elucidated in a court of law.

Our Government gave way. I was compelled to tell the Khedive that unless he authorised a public trial with British barristers to defend Arabi, I could not guarantee the consequences. Happily by the time the trial came on, Lord Dufferin had arrived upon the scene. He had been Governor-General of Canada and Viceroy of India. The British public knew and trusted him. The public trial had exactly the result which I had endeavoured to arrange for the court-martial. The only difference was that the intervention of British lawyers, coupled with the long delay, cost some thousands of pounds to those who had to pay them. Arabi pleaded guilty, was condemned to death, and his sentence was immediately commuted to banishment for life."

"Was Arabi the villain that his enemies painted him?"

"In the dramas of life which I have witnessed, the villains whom I have known have not justified their reputation."

"I understand what you mean. But do not speak loosely; their reputation may be well founded, but it is very natural that in personal contact you may

be unable to discern the evil bent of their characters."

"I concede the difficulty of judging, I concede the power which able men possess to mislead, but still there remains with me a strong conviction that the motives of great actors in the tragedies of the world, in which I class wars and rebellions, are of a nature to deserve the respect, if not the sympathy, of those who can see two sides to a question. Of course there are the minor ruffians, the 'supers' who play for a shilling a night, they are beneath consideration; but the chief villain is a man who has attained the position by great qualities, among which you will find a high ideal, supported by earnest conviction and an iron will. The quality which so many of them lack is judgment. Hence their failure."

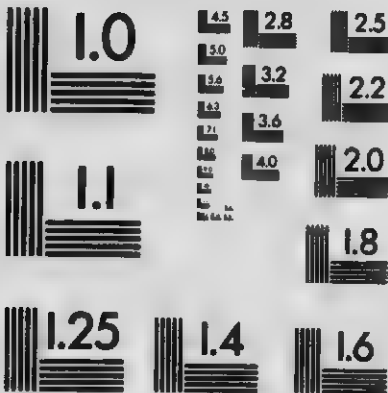
"We may pass on; I gather your opinion of Arabi. You have mentioned Lord Dufferin's arrival. How did you take your eclipse?"

"One day, as I was going to visit him, I saw a foreign colleague on the opposite side of the way. He crossed and engaged me in conversation.



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Presently he said, 'My dear friend, there is a matter which puzzles me greatly. How comes it that you English work together without friction? How is it that you and Lord Dufferin seem to work like one? And how is it, above all, that you and he, representing the civil administration, do not combine to thwart the military authorities? You all appear to be in harmony. To me this is more astonishing than I can tell you. In every case in which civil and military chiefs are together in our foreign posts friction at once ensues, and continues till one or the other has to be recalled. What is your secret? How do you manage it?'

"Unfortunately I could give him no satisfactory explanation. I said that we were all good friends, that we had the same object in view, that we saw each other constantly, which prevented our inadvertently taking lines of action which might clash. I did not tell him that it was simply because Englishmen are trained to place the matter in hand above personal considerations, and to work together unselfishly for the service of the Queen; I felt that if I did so he would only set me down

as a *poseur*. He shook his head and said, 'I can't understand it; were we in your place all our chiefs would have been by the ears long ago.'

"But, apart from this theory of national bias, no one could have done otherwise than work with heart and will under Lord Dufferin. He was the most fascinating chief under whom I have served; his strength of intellect, brilliancy of wit, and joyousness of spirit all drew you towards him. Besides, I had requested our Government to send him. Soon after our return to Cairo I had been asked whether it would not be expedient to appoint someone to Egypt as Special Commissioner, and I deprecated it; but, as difficulties developed, I changed my mind. I recognised that the Theatre had become too big for me, my voice was no longer powerful enough to fill the vast auditorium, now that it included not alone all England, but a great part of Europe as well. I bowed to the necessity of a *primo tenore assoluto*, upon the charm of whose voice we could depend to command the applause of stalls, boxes, and amphitheatre. I wrote to Lord Granville saying that I would like to take advantage

of his earlier offer. No doubt I was eclipsed, but it never occurred to me until you so delicately called my attention to it."

"It amuses me to worry you, so I will ask how it came about that you were away from Egypt during the hottest time? You will remember that we suddenly heard that you had quitted shortly after the riots at Cairo. It was stated that you were ill, but rumours followed that you had been disapproved, and would not return to your post."

"I had been some ten days at Alexandria in a hotel on the Grande Place in the centre of the town. As usual in the evening several people came in to talk over passing events. It was a hot sultry night, and I was sitting on the balcony; I suddenly felt something come over me, which I can only liken to a poisonous veil. I remained inert for a few minutes, and then got up, and, breaking off the conversation in which I had been engaged, said I must go in; an overpowering sense of drowsiness took possession of me, and I went to bed. In the morning I was called as usual at seven, but paid no heed. At half-past eight my servant

shook me, and reminded me that I had to receive the Turkish Imperial Commissioner, Dervish Pacha, at nine o'clock. I dressed quickly, and was in the drawing-room in time. He was just coming up the stairs, and I remember that even when I had saluted him and placed him on the sofa by me, he seemed to me to be a long way off. It was a visit of ceremony, and I believe I acquitted myself with decorum. I remember conducting him to the top of the stairs. Then I went back to the sofa and fell fast asleep. Presently the servant announced Sir Auckland Colvin. I sat up, and saw an odd expression on his face. 'What is the matter with you?' he said; 'your eyes are starting out of your head.' 'I don't know,' I replied; 'I feel very tired.' He advised me to go back to bed, and somehow or another I did so, but all after that was blank. I only remember sleeping a troubled sleep. Occasionally I was aware that people were looking at me, but I did not feel any interest in them. Next day, to my intense annoyance, I found a nurse sitting by my side, and I only began to understand her presence when I found

that I was too weak to move without help. I had been struck down by what was called there *febre perniciosa*. If it had lasted till the morning I must have died, but at midnight it stopped. I was told that it had not lessened by degrees, but had suddenly ceased, to the surprise and relief of those who were watching. I was very nearly recalled, but not by Government. Ten days later I was carried down to the port, and put on board the packet bound for Venice. It was only after steaming out of the harbour that I began to feel my strength returning, but I was a prey to bitter regret; it seemed so hard that I should be obliged to leave at the moment when the drama in which I had such an intense interest was drawing to its climax, and I was sufficiently versed in the malevolence of rumour to be certain that my illness, as you were so good as to hint in your question, would be regarded as a feint, and ascribed to political causes. On arriving in England I was as down-hearted as a man could be. Physicians were in vain; but one who was not a doctor healed me. At my first interview with Lord Granville he

said to me, 'All that we desire is that you should get well as quickly as possible; we want you back at your post.' From that moment I rapidly mended. Mind and body now helped each other and worked together. I was advised to go to Whitby, where the east wind imparted to me a renewing vitality, and braced me sufficiently to enable me to go back to Cairo at the same time that Lord Wolseley's staff went out."

CHAPTER IV

CONSTANTINOPLE, 1878-1879

"WHAT you told me about your departure from Egypt," continued Whiffles, "accounts amply for your absence ; one can only be sorry for the view you took of it. You, no doubt, thought that your unlucky star had for the moment gained the ascendant. Dismiss the idea from your mind ; no more opportune illness ever came to a man. In reality your lucky star. Had you remained at Cairo, the moment would have come when you would have had to acquiesce in the bombardment or to advise against it. If you had acquiesced, your position would have made you responsible for the consequences without the excuses which were patent in favour of the naval commander. If you had advised against it——" Whiffles paused ; he clearly did not see what would have happened in the latter case ; even he could not tell what would have been the result of a thing that never occurred.

"I daresay you are right," I said. "It is true that I should have had to say 'yes' or 'no.' Those little words are now and then of vast importance. No doubt I ought to be thankful that it did not fall upon me to choose between them in regard to the bombardment of Alexandria."

"It required an illness which brought you nigh unto death to save you from having to do so. I remember you saying that the things you disliked had turned to your advantage. This is a good instance of it."

"Shall I relate another?"

"Take your own line of country. It is not unpleasant to jog along in the lanes now and then."

"In 1878 I was Secretary of Embassy at Rome, the pleasantest post in the service. All embassies are equal in rank, and my hope was to remain at Rome till I obtained promotion to the next grade, which is that of Minister. It would probably have taken six or seven years to arrive at this, but, wrapt in the charm of my surroundings, I desired no better than to spend the interval where I was. I came home on leave, and, while staying in the

country, I received a telegram from the Foreign Office telling me that Lord Salisbury desired to see me, so I cut my visit short and went to town.

"At the Foreign Office I found the Private Secretary—he engaged me in general conversation till a bell rang, when he went into the next room, and, emerging from it immediately, told me that Lord Salisbury would see me. There are double doors between the Secretary's room and the room of the Secretary of State, with a space between them large enough to stand in when both doors are closed. I expected to pass through these at once as usual, but the Secretary opened the first door, waited till I was inside, and kept his hand on the second door to give him time to say to me, 'Lord Salisbury wants you to go to Constantinople, and he does not like to be refused.' With that he opened the second door and I was in Lord Salisbury's presence. It was known both that I liked Rome and that I had a strong dislike to Constantinople."

"Why?"

"I had already been there for two years with Lord Lyons, from 1865 to 1867, and I had often said that it was the only post to which I hoped never to return."

"Most men in your profession have delighted in it."

"Quite true. It possesses many attractions—the scenery, the open-air life at Therapia, and the charm which Oriental surroundings always possess, have exercised their spell. To me they were never sufficiently potent to counteract the hopeless gloom which attended official work. One was never free from the awful reality of the pains of Sisyphus; every stone that you rolled uphill came down again. In those days Fuad Pacha and Aali Pacha alternated as Grand Vizier—they were both statesmen of great and varied ability, but whichever was in office appeared to vie with the other in preventing any question, great or little—the reform of a province or a commercial claim, from coming to a solution. On one occasion, in pressing a claim which had been urged by the Embassy for some twenty years, Lord Lyons said, 'I wonder

you don't yield, if it is only to get rid of the matter and have done with it.' 'That is the last thing I desire,' said Aali Pacha. 'If I get rid of one question it only opens the door to another.'

"You know the Song of the Shirt?"

"Yes."

"Well, change 'stitch, stitch, stitch,' to 'work, work, work,' and put the Ambassador into the place of the ground-down seamstress, and you have, to my mind, the lot of an Ambassador at Constantinople."

"Once upon a time," said Whiffles sententiously, "a Bishop of Exeter, named Phillpotts, was showing to a young lady fresh from town the beauties of the scenery of Torquay. She eagerly responded to his enthusiasm and said, 'It is just like Switzerland.' 'Exactly,' replied the eminent divine, 'only in Switzerland there is no sea, and here there are no mountains.' In a similar way the parallel you have suggested of the Ambassador and the seamstress may be excellent, except that in the case of the Ambassador there is no misery,

and in that of the seamstress no splendour. But all this time Lord Salisbury is waiting."

"He said to me immediately with the kind, grave tone which is habitual to him, 'I am going to offer you a change which I fear may not be agreeable to you. We have had accounts from Constantinople which lead us to fear that Sir Henry Layard's health may oblige him to come home, and we wish you to go out to be in charge in case our fears are realised.' I said at once that I was deeply obliged to him, and it was speedily settled that I should start forthwith.

"It was the summer of 1878, the Russians were at San Stefano, the British fleet was in the Sea of Marmora. When I arrived the Ambassador was engaged in the negotiations for the cession of Cyprus. He left for England early in the following year and I took charge of the Embassy, but officials of the rank of chargé d'affaires could not be received by the Sultan, and as it was deemed necessary that I should be in personal communication with His Majesty I was raised to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary."

"And achieved in a few months that which, unless you had been sent to Constantinople, would have taken years."

"Yes, and add to that the invaluable experience which I gained of Oriental diplomacy, and of the never-failing intrigue against which it is necessary to be on one's guard."

"And countermine!"

"Only in a certain sense. If you meet intrigue with intrigue you are pretty certain to be foiled, the wire-pullers of the East are past masters in the art. The best way of obtaining that regard and consideration which are the foundation of weight and influence is not only never to endeavour to mislead, but to be constantly on the watch lest the intrigues which surround you should induce those you have to deal with to doubt your sincerity, and cause them to believe that you are playing a double game. The most constant vigilance and never-ceasing suspicion will not always save you from being caught in the meshes, so finely are they woven, so dexterously is the net thrown.

"The work upon which we were principally en-

gaged at that time was endeavouring to induce the Porte to surrender Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, in accordance with its obligations under the Treaty of Berlin. In the course of these negotiations a very strong remonstrance came to me in a cipher telegram from Lord Salisbury, which I was instructed to communicate personally on the following morning to the Sultan. It urged his immediate compliance with the terms of the Treaty, and coupled the advice with hints at the consequences of refusal. At about ten in the evening one of my dragomans came to me and said that he had a very important message to give me from the palace. He stated that by some means or another the nature of the message which I was to deliver in the morning had become known, and that he had been told very confidentially that if I carried out my instructions the most serious consequences would ensue in the opposite direction to that we desired. I asked from whom the message came. 'It comes direct from the Sultan,' replied the dragoman. 'Have you seen him?' I asked. 'No,' he replied, 'but the person who spoke to

me told me that the Sultan desired me to tell you this.' 'Who is the person?' I asked. 'I cannot give you his name,' he said. 'You cannot give me his name!' I cried in astonishment. 'You know,' he said, 'that I have to hang about the palace all day, and that I am in very confidential communication with those who are nearest to the Sultan; I often get hints which help matters if they are acted on.' I rose in wrath and paced up and down the room. 'I agree with you,' I said at length, 'that the words I am instructed to use are very strong; I had, in fact, intended to modify them in delivery, but after what you have told me I shall accentuate them.'"

"How," said Whiffles demurely, "would you justify your first intention to 'modify' the message?"

It was a silly question, and I intended to pass on without replying, but I reflected that there might be others as ignorant as Whiffles, and so I said—

"It is unavoidable that the manner of delivering a message should rest with the agent. In his interview he ought to be like a doctor feeling the

pulse of a patient—if a few grains of the dose raise the temperature too rapidly he may allow a little time to subside before administering the rest, or he may find that his object is already attained by administration of half the dose, or he may be of the opinion that a gilded pill will suit his patient better than the same drug in a nauseous powder. When I used the word modify I meant that I should adopt the latter mode instead of the former, which had been my first intention. I daresay the word was not correctly used, I should have said moderate, not modify.” While speaking I had realised that the question which Whiffles had put to me was not so silly as I thought; the worst of it was that he never let me off.

“Well,” he said, “when you delivered your message modified, moderated, or accentuated, what happened?”

“Nothing—that is to say, nothing that could lead me to believe that there was a particle of truth in the warning which I had received. I retired from the interview with the conviction that no message had been sent to me by the

Sultan. I gave the dragoman the benefit of the doubt that he was the victim of an intrigue and not an agent. Being only temporarily in charge it was more convenient for me to take this view. In painting my canvas I had to make the best of brushes which were lent to me."

"As you tell the story there is a point which wants clearing. How could anyone at the palace be aware of the contents of an instruction sent to you in cipher?"

"That is capable of explanation. If the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs decided on a strong instruction, he would very likely use the same words to the Turkish Ambassador in London, who would at once telegraph them to his Government.

"It is a serious drawback to be obliged to communicate with the Sultan through a dragoman. The straightforward English words are wreathed in Oriental flowers of speech in translation. I always felt that though the sense might be transmitted the force was lost. On one occasion I was summoned unexpectedly to the palace; my

chief dragoman was absent, and I had to take with me a junior who had not been to Yildiz Kiosk before. As we drove thither he told me that he was nervous, as he had never been called upon to translate in a conversation with the Sultan. I said to him that he need not be anxious; that what I desired and insisted upon was that he should render what I said in Turkish without circumlocution or amplification, but I added that he would probably not be called into requisition, as the Sultan always had his own dragoman present. It turned out, however, that the Sultan and I were equally without our usual interpreters. He had sent to me on the spur of the moment, and when I arrived the imperial dragoman could not be found. I quickly detected that the interview was taking a different form from those which had preceded it. My remarks took no longer to translate than to enunciate; my dragoman was clearly unacquainted with the etiquette of the Court, which required that every sentence should be wrapt in the flowers of hyperbole in transmission. I seized the opportunity to carry the

conversation beyond the subject in hand and to speak as earnestly as possible on points which I was most anxious to place before the Sultan in an unadorned state. By degrees I saw His Majesty's eyes open wider and wider. The languid attitude to which I was accustomed changed to one of rapt attention, and I felt for the first time that the words which I used were being conveyed to him clearly and distinctly. When the conversation came to an end the Sultan was in a state of animation in which I had never seen him before, and I was not at all certain whether resentment did not partly conduce to it. I was therefore agreeably surprised when he desired the dragoman to tell me that he had derived particular satisfaction from the clear and straightforward way in which the latter had performed his office.

"Since those days the custom of having semi-orientals to translate has disappeared. The office is now in the hands of Englishmen, and there is no longer any danger of the words of the Ambassador being changed from wine to water in transmission.

"On another occasion I had a strange experience at the palace. I have mentioned before that the principal negotiations which were proceeding at the time related to the surrender of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, in accordance with the stipulation of the Treaty of Berlin. This rendered necessary a subsidiary treaty between the Porte and Austria regulating the terms of the Turkish evacuation of those provinces. The delays which were placed in the way of the signature of this treaty had already tried the patience of the Austrian Ambassador, Count Zichy, to the extent that it had come to a question of his quitting the capital within forty-eight hours with or without the treaty in his pocket. The ambassadorial despatch boat lay off the quay with the steam up, ready to convey His Excellency to Trieste. Meanwhile my instructions were to leave no stone unturned in my endeavours to induce the Sultan to authorise the signature. At this critical juncture, within twenty-four hours of the time fixed for the Ambassador to leave Constantinople, an Aide-de-camp of the Sultan came to me with a message that I was requested to return with him at

once to the palace. On arriving I was taken, not to the Sultan's wing, but to a room on the ground-floor with which I was unacquainted. Here I was left by myself for about half an hour. An officer at last came to me, and conducting me through several long corridors, ushered me into a large room surrounded by divans, on which seven or eight people were seated; one of them rose and advanced to meet me.

"It was Khaireddin Pacha, the Grand Vizier. He took me by the hand and placed me by his side, and I found that Karatheodori Pacha, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was on my other side. I soon perceived that the other persons present were the remaining Ministers. I was, in fact, in the midst of a Cabinet Council.

"Khaireddin was a remarkable man. He was a Tunisian by birth, and had been for many years the first Minister of the Bey of Tunis. By his enlightened administration he had brought the country to a degree of prosperity and strength which had attracted the covetous eyes of our Gallic friends. He was an honest and clear-sighted re-

former, and when the Sultan summoned him to Constantinople it was felt that he was destined for high office, but few expected that His Majesty would dare to appoint him Grand Vizier. Though a Mahommedan he was a foreigner, and in this apparent disqualification lay probably the secret of his elevation. Whenever a national humiliation has to be encountered in the East the sacrificial high priest is tainted with the disgrace of the sacrifice, and as soon as the ceremony is over he is dismissed from office and cast into outer darkness. At the time of the Congress of Berlin, for instance, the Porte had able Mahommedan diplomats in its service, jealous of every high appointment that should be made, yet at this supreme moment, when the terms of the treaty and therefore the fortunes of the Empire must depend to a great extent on the qualities of the Turkish Plenipotentiary, Karatheodori Pacha was appointed to the office. He was a man of great ability, and probably the negotiations were as safe in his hands as they would have been in those of a Mahommedan, but he was chosen because he was a Christian.

The blame of the concessions, which were inevitable, would rest with him, and he was not Mahomedan. The sequence to the treaty was the execution of the details, and in order to save the odium of it from falling on a Turk, Khaireddin Pacha was appointed Grand Vizier. He received fair and honourable support as long as he was wanted for this particular purpose ; but afterwards, when his active and reforming temperament began to grapple with the abuses of internal administration, intrigue of every kind bristled round him. Imperial support was withdrawn, and he fell, never to rise again.

“This then was the statesman who, on the occasion I am relating, gravely took me by the hand and placed me on the divan by his side. His Highness (Grand Viziers are highnesses) introduced me to his colleagues with a wave of his hand, saying that I no doubt knew most of them already, that they were met together at the bidding of the Sultan, and that they desired to confer with me upon a matter of State in which I had already taken an active part and had shown a warm in-

terest. 'I was aware,' he said, 'of the difficulties which had presented themselves in the execution of that part of the Treaty of Berlin which related to the surrender of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austrian administration, and of the great sacrifices which the Porte had made at the instance of Great Britain.' (This, of course, was an Eastern flower of speech used as a verbal courtesy towards myself.) 'Nothing,' he said, 'now remained but to sign, but at the last moment a point had occurred to the Ministers, which they desired me to submit to Her Majesty's Government. It consisted in a deviation of the proposed line of frontier, which, in their opinion, would be advantageous to both Turkey and Austria.' As he said this he and all the other Ministers got off the divan, and approached a table on which a large map was unrolled. 'Here,' said Khairaddin, 'is the frontier line as at present agreed upon. Here is the one which we desire to substitute for it.'

"It need only be explained that the new line restored an important town to the Turkish territory, and gave in exchange a large tract of country

which might or might not be deemed as an equivalent by Austria.

"I urged that the negotiations were closed, and that I was sure that the Austrian Ambassador would leave on the following evening, unless the agreement were signed. The Grand Vizier made no reply to my arguments. He said that the Sultan desired me to telegraph the proposal to Lord Salisbury, and ask his lordship in His Majesty's name to support it at Vienna.

"When the matter was put to me in this way, I could not do otherwise but consent. It was not possible for me to refuse to convey a message from the Sultan, however useless I might deem it. There were writing materials on the table. I said that I would draft the message and submit it to the Grand Vizier, so that there might be no question afterwards as to whether its wording conveyed precisely what His Majesty desired me to say. This occupation gave me a little time for reflection, and when the wording had been examined and approved I said, 'At all events Russia will be delighted.' 'Why?' asked the Grand

Vizier. 'Clearly,' I said, 'if you are successful in your proposal you will have made a hole in the Treaty of Berlin. You know Russia well enough to be sure that she will at once take advantage of it. You will have created the precedent. The Powers could not refuse to her what they have conceded to you.' The Ministers began talking to each other quietly in Turkish. Presently Khairaddin Pacha turned to me, and asked me to wait while they informed the Sultan that I had consented to convey the message, the terms of which they would submit for His Majesty's approval.

"On that they filed noiselessly and gravely from the room, leaving me alone.

"Everything moves slowly in the East, and I waited for an hour without any particular surprise, but when a second hour had passed I began to get somewhat impatient. I went to the door, and saw nothing but the usual silent attendants of the Palace. I knew no Turkish; they knew nothing else. I made signs, with the result that they brought me more coffee and more cigarettes. It

was nigh three hours before the double doors of the hall opened, and the Ministers again came solemnly into the room. They seated themselves solemnly on the divans, and I was once more solemnly invited to take my place between the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, where I waited in solemn silence for what the Grand Vizier might be pleased to say to me.

“‘His Majesty,’ he said at length in deliberate tones, ‘thanks you for the good will which you have shown, and begs you to think no more on the subject. He will not trouble you to send the message.’

“‘Then what am I to telegraph to Lord Salisbury?’ I asked.

“‘His Majesty requests you not to telegraph. He wishes you to regard all that passed between us as cancelled. Consider that it never occurred and telegraph nothing.’

“I desired no better conclusion to the long afternoon. I rose, and taking leave of them all with grave ceremony retired. On the following day the Treaty was signed.”

"Is there," said Whiffles, "any injunction in the Koran never to do to-day that which you can postpone till to-morrow?"

"There must be," I answered with conviction. "It is the only way to account for the determined procrastination of Mahommedans which meets you at every point."

"They are no doubt intensely religious."

"I am glad you use the word religious. From the tone you have hitherto adopted I should have expected you to say 'fanatic.'"

"If I had I should be better understood. It is usual to attribute the piety of those who are not Christians to fanaticism."

"Yet what a lesson they teach us! Every Mahommedan, be he great or humble, when the appointed time comes each day for his religious devotions, goes down on his knees and bends his head to the earth in prayer, whether he be alone or in company. This unhesitating observance of their religious rites has always renewed in me each time that I have witnessed it a deep humiliation. I remember the words, 'Whosoever is ashamed of

Me, of him will I be ashamed,' and I contrast the bearing of these people with our own."

"Sir Edward," said Whiffles, "you alarm me—you must not throw a doubt on our being the most religious nation of the world; that is our particular pride."

"Call it our particular aspiration and I shall have more hope for the future. At present we are far behind Mahommedans in the outward observance of our respective creeds."

"And the inward?"

"There too I should say that they were ahead of us. The Mahommedan world breathes with a more uniform rise and fall than the Christian world. It is a body of which the head is the keeper of the holy places. Imagine a giant lying at length on the earth with his head on the Bosphorus and his limbs stretching over Asia and part of Africa. Then, like Jack the Giant Killer, advance warily, when he is asleep, and put your finger in his eye, the limbs will at once show signs of unrest, and with a marvellous instinct they will know whether Jack is Russian, French, or British.

"Another memory of those days rises in my mind. A recollection of what might have been, but died away into darkness—a cup which fell as I lifted it to my lips. My conversations with the Sultan had ranged over every topic touching the Empire—as usual the most urgent was ways and means. I had assured His Majesty that hopes which had been held out to him of raising a loan in England were fallacious. I had propounded the simple formula that you cannot raise money unless you can give security. I had not the wit to suggest the assignment of special revenues, for I had no knowledge as a financier. I merely harped on the total absence of confidence in the actual financial administration of the revenues, and said that as long as this lasted there was not the remotest chance of raising a loan on the English market. I suppose my 'damnable iteration' on this theme made the Sultan turn over in his mind how he could restore the necessary confidence, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs came to me one day and told me that His Majesty had made up his mind to appoint an English Minister of Finance.

The proposition was so astounding that I cross-questioned him thoroughly to be quite sure that there might be no mistake. He stuck to his guns, and made an official request that I would acquaint Her Majesty's Government with His Majesty's intentions, and request that an Englishman might be designated for the office. I telegraphed home as fully as was possible, and requested in my turn that I might be informed whose name I might submit to the Sultan, as a fit and proper person to undertake the position offered. I received an answer saying that as the proposal seemed to have been made to me personally, I had better make my own selection. It so happened that some sixteen years before I had made the acquaintance of Evelyn Baring at Washington. He was at that time a young officer in the Royal Artillery who had come south from Canada, where he was stationed, to see what he could of the Northern Army, and now in 1879 he was the British Comptroller-General at Cairo. It seemed to me that no better man could be thought of. I telegraphed to him and received a cautious answer asking for further

particulars in regard to the amount of independence which would be conceded to the person to be appointed. On this I had several interviews with the Minister, and the promises held out were apparently all that could be desired. They satisfied Evelyn Baring, and I received from him a conditional acceptance which enabled me to go so far as to submit his name to the Sultan. But by this time my term of office had nearly come to a close, and the final word was never spoken. Sir Henry Layard had recovered his health, and was on his way back to Constantinople. I received dilatory messages from the Porte, and retired into comparatively private life as Secretary of Embassy, without being able to bring the matter to a conclusion."

"Probably the Sultan was not in earnest," Whiffles suggested.

"I do not think so," I replied. "The proposal was absolutely spontaneous. I have not the slightest doubt that at the time he made it, and afterwards, he thoroughly intended it. Speculations as to the reasons of his abandoning it are idle. Those who know the intrigues which are used to frustrate the

smallest progress will not wonder that so momentous a change encountered insurmountable opposition. I can only wonder now that the matter was allowed to proceed as far as it did. Nevertheless, I never look back upon the incident without thinking what an opportunity was lost. If Evelyn Baring had been able to assume the duties of Minister of Finance at that moment at Constantinople, the whole future of the Empire might have been changed."

"He would not have lasted six months," said Whiffles aggressively.

"That cannot be said for certain. The Sultan would have found in him a loyal Minister of great ability. The reforms which he would have begun would quickly have borne fruit, and there can be no safer passport to imperial favour than successful finance. Like Moses, he would have tapped the rock, and I doubt there being any necromancers in this particular line at Constantinople whom the Sultan would have trusted after he had once tasted of the full cup. Their dribblets might have staved off the local palace droughts, but Evelyn Baring would have irrigated the Empire. I say again, that

I have never ceased to regret that the good intention of the Sultan should have died an unnatural death."

"You need not," said Whiffles, "take it so much to heart. Spare some of your tears for the holocausts of good intentions every July at home. Regard it as an abortive bill and recover your spirits."

CHAPTER V

IN THE LEVANT

"WHAT happened to you next?" inquired Whiffles.

"On leaving Constantinople I was overworked and wanted rest. During the time I had been Minister I never got to bed till two and rose at seven, and I am one of those who believe that eight hours are necessary for health."

"Why stay up so late?"

"The whole day was taken up in receiving visits—that is, visits from persons who came on business; in going to the Porte or to the Ambassadors with whom it was necessary to keep in touch, and in writing the necessary despatches. We dined at eight, and broke up at eleven; then came a moment of quiet, a moment when I knew that I should not be disturbed. I spread out the despatches which had come in during the day from the innumerable Consulates in the Ottoman Empire,

and minuted the answers to be sent, or drafted the despatches to be written, according to the importance of the case. But these details about the hours of labour would not be worth mentioning had they not led to a curious result. If there was anything in my youth to which I looked forward with greater joy than another it was a voyage at sea. Getting on board was to me always a haven of rest."

"You are rather mixed in your simile," said Whiffles, in his captious way.

"The meaning is clear," I rejoined. "Nothing brings more quiet and repose to the mind than starting on a long sea journey; the knowledge that for a certain number of days you can receive no letters, and be obliged to make no replies, brings about such a change as you experience on a first night passed in the quiet of a country house after the ceaseless hum of London. At the time I am speaking about I looked forward to this sort of feeling when I embarked on board a Messageries steamer bound for the coast of Syria. It would require the pen of De Quincey to tell you what

I went through on that journey. Instead of feeling any pleasure I was in a constant state of fear, justified by nothing that my reason could account for. I was oppressed with what I can only call the terror of the unknown, for it never shaped itself into a dread from any assignable cause. When the night came I would go to my berth and in five minutes I was out of it, unable to bear I did not know what. I preferred pacing the deck, and found solace in the neighbourhood of the silent officer of the watch, and all the time I kept saying to myself, 'This is really too silly.' For I knew what was the matter. I was perfectly aware that my state was due to my nerves being unstrung. I knew that the cause was overwork, I knew that my terrors were nothing but fancy, and yet I could not master them. So well did I know what was the matter that I was constantly thinking of a curious case of the same kind which came across my path while I was in charge of the Embassy at Paris during the Commune in 1871.

"A young Englishman, with that eccentricity which has made us a byword abroad, found

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amusement in helping the Communards as an amateur. • For the time being he threw in his lot with theirs. He spent his day at the advanced posts, and I learned accidentally that he would boast of his day's sport in directing the guns in the batteries. On that I spoke to him. I said what I could in a friendly way to dissuade him from what I may mildly call his folly, and as I could get no sign of contrition or promise of change from him, I told him that I should give orders to the porter of the Embassy not to admit him within its gates. He was full of life and spirits, treated the whole matter jauntily, and seemed to think that it was rather a good joke. I saw no more of him till the Commune had expired in blood and fire. The moment came when everyone who had had to do with it was being shot down in the streets as though they were game, pheasants, or wolves, no difference was made. Then my young man came to me and asked me to get him out of Paris—his life was in danger—would I save him? There was only one way of effecting his escape. Nobody at the time was allowed to leave the city, but I had the privilege

of sending a messenger nightly to London with despatches for the Foreign Office. I told him that I would give him the bag to take that night, but it was necessary that the permission for him to pass should be obtained from the military headquarters, which for the time being were established at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, on the Quai d'Orsay. The few messengers I had at my disposal were out in every direction. I had no one to send; he must go himself. All the jauntiness had gone out of him; he was like a rag soaked in water. I had so much to do that I left him, having settled the matter off-hand, without waiting for his reply. This was in the forenoon. At five o'clock he came again. If a man could grow old in a few hours he seemed to have done so. He told me that he was very sorry that he could not go to the Quai d'Orsay to get the requisite permission. I looked at him in astonishment, and asked him what he meant. He hung his head and murmured, 'I cannot pass the Pont de la Concorde—the trenches, the dead bodies—I can't go by them.'"

"What trenches?" said Whiffles.

"On either side of the Pont de la Concorde trenches were dug, and the bodies of the people who were shot, men and women, were thrown into them. They lay in piles, one atop of another. I looked at my young friend. Feelings of anger, pity, and contempt, mixed with an urgent desire to save his life, ended in my sending one of the Embassy messengers, who had now come in, to the military headquarters with a request for a permit for my messenger to quit Paris that night. I felt pretty certain that his name could not have become known there as taking a share in the Commune. It was an honourable name, conveying the idea of distinction with it, and I was therefore perhaps the less sorry to give him the paper which enabled him to escape from punishment for his criminal eccentricity. As he took it an expression passed over his face such as one might expect in a man condemned to death who had obtained a reprieve.

"This instance of a man whose nerves had broken down constantly came to my mind when I was in the same predicament, but it had no healing virtue. My reason and my physical con-

dition were at war, and time only enabled reason to gain the upper hand. It came very slowly. While I was recovering an incident occurred which more or less cured me, for reality drives away vapours. I arrived at Beyrout on Christmas Day, and went on shore to dine at noon with the Consul-General, Mr. Eldridge, who was celebrated equally for his diplomatic management of a difficult post and for his hospitality. I sat down to a sumptuous feast, but in the middle of it a messenger arrived to say that if I wished to get on board I must come without delay; the wind had risen, the barometer had fallen to anything you like to name, the steamer must go to sea. Mr. Eldridge, who knew the conditions of the roadstead, told me I must leave at once. I hurried down to the quay. It was blowing great guns. I got on board with difficulty. I should perhaps explain that there is no harbour at Beyrout, and when the wind blows from the west with violence steamers are in danger of being driven on shore; their only chance is to go to sea. When I stepped on deck the greatest confusion prevailed. About a hundred people had

come on board to see their friends off. The gale was so great that the boats which had brought them were literally blown away from the side of the ship. The steamer was dragging at her anchors; there was nothing for it but to go, and we put to sea with all these unwilling passengers on board. Their distress was terrible. Men, women, and children, all of the poorer classes, carried away suddenly from their homes, and sickness quickly added to their mental distress. Perhaps this lessened the further difficulty of providing them with food. For three days they were buffeted on the waves. The storm mitigated at last, and we were able to make for Alexandretta. Then came the question of how all these unfortunate people were to be got back to Beyrout. It was a case without precedent. The company on whose steamer they had been carried away by the visitation of God gave them their passage free, but refused to frank them back. We raised a subscription among the passengers, and a returning steamer took them to Beyrout. The little social gathering of seeing their friends off had cost them

a week at sea, and who knows what perturbation in their homes.

"My landing at Alexandretta was accompanied by a quaint episode, which gave me a new view as to the import of the colour of the eye. The quay was crowded with natives, and every look was directed towards me as I mounted the steps on quitting the boat. As I stepped on shore I found myself in a throng, which made a lane to allow me to pass. I learned afterwards from my dragoman that my arrival was an event. It was supposed that I had come as the forerunner of a British occupation. Our fleet was at the time in the Sea of Marmora. We had a month or two before announced our 'lease' of Cyprus, and the swift imagination of the inhabitants of the coast had clothed the advent of the Secretary of the British Embassy with excessive importance. It was reported that I was to be their future Governor, and they came in their hundreds to look at me. 'I hope,' I said carelessly, 'that I made a good impression.' An Oriental almost invariably replies in accordance with what he supposes to be your

wish ; and my dragoman, according to all precedent, should have told me that they were delighted with my appearance. Instead of doing so he excited my interest by beating about the bush. I could not but understand that the impression I had created was, in truth, unfavourable.

"'But,' I said, 'in what way could they have formed a judgment in so short a moment?' 'They thought,' said the dragoman, 'that you would be cruel.' 'What on earth could make them think that?' I asked in astonishment. '*Your blue eyes,*' replied the dragoman; and on further inquiry he told me that clear blue eyes were always regarded by his countrymen as a sign of a cruel disposition. I have since ascertained that this was not a local superstition, but that it is general in the East to regard the blue eye as an indication of cruelty in its possessor.

"I saw at Alexandretta two beautiful cats belonging to our Vice-Consul. I had never had a strong feeling about cats, either for or against them. My inclination had always been to be civil to them, and if they were civil to me, and rubbed

themselves against my trousers and purred, I was rather pleased; but these cats conveyed an altogether new sensation to me. They had the most beautiful faces I ever saw. Do you know the Sistine Madonna?"

Whiffles had a quiet way of assuming that he knew everything, so I did not wait for his reply.

"You will remember that at the base of the picture are two child angels. Raphael has put into their faces an ineffable sweetness, which places them above all other ideal representations of angels which exist. These two Alexandretta cats had the expression of the Sistine angels. I said in a generalising way to the Vice-Consul that I should like to have a cat like that, but he only smiled a smile which conveyed to me that I might as well say I should like to have a Sistine Madonna. To him they were as precious and as rare."

"Though you speak in an off-hand way of your regard for cats in general, I suspect you of liking them and dogs also."

"As to dogs, I like them so much that I do not

dare to have one. When I began my career at Brussels my mother gave me a dog, his name was Tip. He was a long-haired little fellow, with eyebrows overhanging a pair of lustrous and plaintive eyes. I became a slave to him. It was most irksome, and interfered quite disproportionately with my daily life. My time was encumbered with what I had to do for that dog. If I did not do all he wanted it went to my heart, and what he wanted was that I should attend to him and to nobody else. We had quarrels, but he always got the best of them. My condition corresponded with what I was told long afterwards by a very famous descrier of character who examined my hand. He said, 'You will always be the slave of anyone who is fond of you. It is a great danger. If you fall into good hands, all will go vell; but if a wicked person gains your affection, you are lost.' (Tip was not wicked.) 'But,' said Monsieur Desbarolles, for he was the palmist who told me this, 'you happily have good sense enough to make it pretty sure that you are safe. You will only give your love to one who is true and honourable.' That

was eighteen years before I married, so he was a pretty good prophet."

"Do you believe in palmists?"

"No; but I am inclined to believe in palmistry. I travelled once in Greece during Lent, and to safeguard me from brigands I was given a corporal and a private to go with me. They were not otherwise than pleasant companions, and their conversation improved my knowledge of modern Greek. Greece is the most inexpensive country to travel in that I have ever visited, or was so in 1875. Possibly things may have changed since then, but at that time there were no hotels outside Athens, and a traveller was put up by the chief man of the towns he visited, who made it a point to accept no remuneration for his hospitality; but sometimes it happened that at the hour at which we wanted refreshment we came to a hamlet in which there was no local grand seigneur, and then we used to have recourse to the priest. The Greeks keep fast very strictly. In Lent it is very much against their grain to give you any animal food. We arrived at a village at midday, and the

midday meal was the object of our halt. My corporal went in search of food while I strolled about. As I returned to the village I found an altercation going on between him and the local Archimandrite, and to my consternation I saw the corporal suddenly take the priest by the scruff of the neck and kick him. I intervened, greatly incensed against the corporal. The quarrel had arisen through the refusal of the priest to kill for our luncheon a fine hen which was strutting about the yard. Having effected a truce I asked the corporal whether he was not ashamed of himself to behave in such a way to a priest of his religion. He tossed his head and said, 'Oh, the religion is good, but the priests are all scamps!' Rejecting the collective adjective, this is my view regarding palmistry and palmists. I believed in Desbarolles because he told me points about my character which were of practical use to me. He gave me a map of my own mountains and valleys."

"As how?" said Whiffles, in extremely colloquial English; but I had by this time observed that he

was a many-sided man in his views and his manner of speaking.

"He told me that I had the gift of prophecy to an extent which he had only come across once before, and that was in the hand of Alexandre Dumas. He explained that in using the word prophecy he did not suggest that I had any occult knowledge of the future, but that I had the power of judging what must be the natural result of passing events to an extent which amounted to the gift of prophecy."

"Did he know who you were?" said Whiffles.

"I answered without hesitation that it was impossible. I happened to be passing through Paris in 1879. I was in travelling clothes. I waited in his anteroom for half an hour after paying my twenty francs. He was quite at sea about my profession. He thought I was in the army, which made me laugh, so as somewhat to discountenance him, and he said with a show of temper, 'At all events you have been under fire, on that point there are lines in your hand which have never deceived me; besides,' he said, 'you

nave commanded, you have had people under your orders. I put the two together and thought you must be an officer. You will easily understand that the lines do not tell me your profession, that must naturally be a guess.' He was quite right in his premises.

"He made a remark, which I commend to the attention of all the lady drawing-room palmists who are now the fashion, and who are not averse to conciliating their clients by foretelling happy marriages. He told me that the lines in the hand conveyed nothing in regard to marriage, for the very simple reason that they are natural and that marriage is artificial. The lines will show if you can love or if you have loved, but are powerless to show legal contracts, past or future."

"You are a little discursive," said Whiffles, "let us come back to the point of the practical use which you gained from his information."

"Towards the end of our interview, which had lasted for over an hour, he said, 'It is a pity that the quality of judgment which is so marked in your hands should be useless to you. It is quite

cancelled by the absence of self-confidence. You possess a gift, of the value of which you seem to have no knowledge.' Whether these words were true or not they had a permanent effect upon me. It is not going too far to say that they opened a new world to me. I suppose I had formed opinions on passing events, but it had never occurred to me that they were of any value, or that I need ever endeavour to act on them. They were merely fleeting impressions, like dreams you do not remember. I had hitherto been a trustworthy drudge. Desbarolles' words jumped me to another condition. I began to consider what my own opinions were, and ventured to act and advise in accordance with them. I do not think I should have become Ambassador at Berlin if I had not had that interview with a palmist, who rightly or wrongly made me believe what he told me. As I was leaving him I said, 'You have not been able to guess my profession. I am in the diplomatic service.' 'Eh bien, Monsieur,' he replied, 'je ne puis que féliciter votre gouvernement.'"

"The French," said Whiffles, "certainly ex-

cel in the art of saying pleasant things gracefully."

"Yes, from the highest to the lowest they all have the gift. I was at the Hotel de Paris at Monte Carlo. After dinner the waiter would bring cigars. I always refused them, saying that I preferred taking my coffee on the terrace with a cigarette and listening to the music. Added to this was the consideration that his cigars were extravagantly dear. One franc fifty was the lowest. If I ever wanted something stronger than a cigarette I used to smoke the Government sou cigars. They are good tobacco. It was a popular measure to manufacture a cigar which could be bought of the people, and be good at the same time. One evening a thunderstorm set in, and it was clear that there would be no music on the terrace. The waiter saw his opportunity, and advanced smiling with his boxes of cigars, remarking that I could not have my coffee outside in the rain. I was somewhat annoyed at his persistence, and I said, 'I hardly ever smoke cigars, and when I do I prefer those at one sou.' I thought that for a client of the Hotel

de Paris to proclaim a preference for a *sou* cigar would shake him off his balance and end his importunity. I counted without my host, for he, happening to be the Frenchman in general about whom we have been speaking, replied quietly, '*Monsieur ça vous fait honneur, ça montre que, pour vous, l'argent n'a pas de prix.*'


"As I have touched upon the time I spent in Greece, would you like an adventure of the weird and romantic order?"

"Immensely," said Whiffles; "it would be like a breath of my native air."

"While I was Secretary of Legation at Athens I took every opportunity of making excursions. I quickly picked up enough modern Greek to enable me to make myself understood, and the fact that every place that one visited had its classical traditions gave a never-ceasing charm to travel in the interior or among the islands. In the course of one of these outings I found myself at Scyra, where I heard wonderful accounts of Chio, a neighbouring island visited yearly by thousands of pilgrims attracted by a miraculous picture. I

set sail in a small native craft on a fine morning in August, and in the course of the afternoon entered a pretty little port in front of a vast monastery, a huge pile in the midst of desolate surroundings. I had intended to pay my visit and return, but in those waters the winds and the waves are treacherous. Soon after I had set my foot on shore the lapping of the waters announced a rising breeze, which gradually freshened till it became a fierce and steady blast, lashing the sea into waves and preventing any boat from leaving the island.

"While matters were taking this inconvenient turn I was visiting the monastery. It consisted of a centre and two wings jutting towards the sea; there was a church within its walls, and a priest bade me welcome. The miraculous picture was taken down from its place over the altar and uncovered for my edification. I was told that there was no fee, but that those who were allowed to see it usually presented five hundred or a thousand francs to the monastery. The lie was so far successful that it induced me to part with twenty francs when I expected to have been quit



for five. There was nothing else to see except the impossibility of leaving on account of the storm. I was compelled to ask for food and a night's lodging. There was no difficulty, for the whole place was empty. At the time of the Pilgrimage it is inhabited by thousands, but between whiles a single footstep awakes echoes through the long and silent corridors. I walked what seemed to be half a mile before I reached the room assigned to me. It was at the extreme end of the right wing and looked on to the sea. I cast a glance round. The walls were white-washed; there were four beds, a washstand, a table, and some rush chairs. The priest told me it was the best guest room; if I would come back the way he had brought me I should find dinner ready in an hour. He left me, and the sound of his footfall died away by degrees in the distance. By this time rain was added to the wind. I had no book with me; I sat at the window and looked at the sea and the sky. An hour passed; I wandered into the corridor. On the right were windows which looked on to the opposite wing,

on the left the doors of the small rooms assigned to the pilgrims, of which I passed about fifty before I reached the staircase. At the bottom was a modest parlour in which a table with a tablecloth gave signs of dinner; nobody was about, it seemed as though I was the sole inhabitant. At length the door opened, and a Greek servant brought what was to be my dinner—broth, a fowl, and a bottle of wine. I longed for company, and asked if my boatmen were about, but could hear nothing of them. The storm continued, and having finished my repast I returned to my room. Again I paced that long dreary tenantless corridor round the three sides of the building. On opening my door I found a sickly musty smell pervading the room. The window had been closed on account of the wet. In the hopes of getting rid of the bad air I opened it, and allowed the rain to beat in.

“The evenings were long, and it was nine before darkness came on. The feeling of loneliness began to be oppressive. I lit my solitary candle, closed the window, and made up my mind that the best

thing I could do was to go to bed and to sleep ; but the smell reasserted itself. I could not define it, but it made me feel sick. I opened the window again and inhaled the fresh air, for at last the rain had ceased, but the wind and the waves continued to roar, and the night was murky black. However, I could now leave the window open, and the smell diminished. As I paced up and down the room I noticed it again, always in one corner of the room, between where the bed stood and a closed door leading to another room which had not previously caught my attention. I localised it so distinctly that I made up my mind to move the bed to the wall by the window, and run the risk of catching cold rather than be near the smell, which was beginning to fill me with a weird and unaccountable horror, notwithstanding that no inkling of its real cause entered my mind. Had it done so I should have passed a sleepless night. As it was I finally went to bed, turned over on my side towards the fresh air from the window, and soon fell sound asleep.

"It must have been three o'clock before I woke.

I turned and saw a streak of light in the opposite corner of the room. I sat up in bed and looked at it. The darkness was so intense that the short, bright line did not locate itself. I kept looking at it, but could not tell whether it was on the floor or the wall. I lay down and tried to go to sleep again, for as yet I was not thoroughly awake. I shut my eyes, but as I dosed, they would open of themselves, and in my dreamy state the shining bar seemed to advance and recede. At last I could stand it no longer. I became thoroughly awake and I lit my candle. As soon as I had done so I saw that the light came from beneath the door in the opposite corner. I got up and walked across to it; the chink was wide, the light was on my feet. I touched the handle and opened the door.

"In the centre of the room was the corpse of a young woman in her coffin, which stood upon trestles, with tall lighted candles at the four corners. Her hands were crossed and flowers had been laid in them.

"I gazed for a time, then closed the door noiselessly and went back to bed, for there was

nowhere else to go, and I think I was never more thankful for the first streaks of dawn. With them came peace of mind, and I slept till I was awakened by the sound of thumps and bangs and low voices. I heard the heavy footfall of men receding down the corridor, and I knew that *it* was being conveyed away."

"Suppose," said Whiffles, "we pass to a less repugnant subject."

"How ungrateful you are," I cried; "I thought my story would make you feel quite at home. Besides, you remind me of the man who abused the brandy after he had emptied the flask. My story is done. I returned to Scyra the same afternoon. The wind had abated sufficiently for my boatmen to be willing to put to sea.

"As I was going on board a very smart-looking young Greek, gaily dressed in the garb of the country, with a fustanella, the white pleated petticoat you so often see in illustrations, stepped up to me, and asked if I would give him a passage. I readily consented, adding, 'If you are not afraid, for it is still very rough.'

"'Oh,' he said, with a laugh, 'I am a sailor. *The sea has no terrors for those who live on it,*' and he stepped lightly on board, telling me his name was 'Dimitri.' It was a small native craft with a lateen sail. Instead of continuing to fall, the wind rose as we got out to sea, and in a couple of hours it was again blowing a hurricane. We rode the waves jauntily, but the motion was such that it was impossible to do anything but lie upon the small after-deck and hold on. I propped myself against a coil of rope with Dimitri alongside, and he crept closer and closer to me. We could not make Scyra without tacking, and as we went about we nearly capsized. Dimitri put his arms round me, and lay with his head upon my breast.

"'Dimitri! Look up!' He did so, and I saw that his eyes were full of tears.

"'Why, man, what is it?'

"'Ah!' he said, 'it is all very well for you. *You are not a sailor, and do not know the danger.*'

"'Nonsense, see how she rides the waves!'

"'Yes,' he said, 'but we must tack again presently, and then again, and certainly the third time

we shall go over, and I was to have been married to-morrow. That is why I asked to come. No other boat would leave Chio.'

"He laid his head upon my breast again, and sobbed as if his heart would break, and so we lay. I nursed him and spoke such words of comfort as my limited knowledge of his language allowed, but presently a steam-tug hove in sight, and came bearing down upon us. It had been sent out to look for me by our Consul at Scyra, who was alarmed at my prolonged absence. A rope was thrown to us, which we made fast. Dimitri relaxed his hold and dried his tears, and presently stepped upon the quay with the grand air which was habitual to him when circumstances were to his liking.

"But all this is a digression from the subject of dogs, which led up to it. I should like to tell you

"THE STORY OF TOBY.

"I desire to hold up Lord Lyons, our Ambassador at Paris for twenty years, as a warning to all those who say they do not like dogs.

"There were two Tobies. Toby the first and Toby the second. Toby the first was a black-and-tan Manchester terrier who belonged to Lord Lyons' coachman at Washington. He was an adjunct of the stables, and was only known through the scrapes he got into in the town. He had the fighting qualities of his race largely developed, and frequently returned to his home wounded in street brawls. We were somewhat proud of the way in which he upheld his British nationality, but on the whole he was a troublesome dog to possess, and we were content that the burden of ownership should rest with the coachman and not with us. When Lord Lyons left Washington, Toby the first passed with the stables and horses to his successor, and we heard of him no more. I have no doubt that he continued to fight for his country, and that he ultimately lost his life in its defence.

"In 1865 Lord Lyons went as Ambassador to Constantinople. Some of his Washington auxiliaries were still with him, secretaries and servants. Mr. Tanfield, the steward, was a man of splendid presence and offensively English manners. He

lorded over his domain, and watch had to be taken lest he should conceive that his domain extended further than the servants' hall and his own steward's room. He was an excellent servant, but too greatly aware of it. One day he came to Mr. Sheffield, who was Lord Lyons' private secretary, and said, 'I have seen another Toby, sir.' On inquiry it appeared that the dog in question was in build, limb, and colour an exact counterpart of our Washington Toby, and only two years of age. The coincidence was spoken of in Lord Lyons' presence. He liked continuity of association, and without giving his assent raised no objection when it was suggested that we should have a Toby the second in the stables at Constantinople. The dog was bought and paid for by Mr. Sheffield. How he found his way to the capital of the Ottoman Empire was not known; but his breed as a pure black-and-tan Manchester terrier was indisputable. He was told that his name was Toby, that he belonged to the stables, and that he was to make his home there and stay there. Beyond the fact of his acquisition

Lord Lyons knew no more about him for some months, nor did we who frequented the stables divine the ambition and the intellect of the dog any more than those of Napoleon were discovered at Brienne. We saw that he was a clever dog, but we did not dream of the future in store for him.

"There was much state at the Embassy—the staff and occasional guests dined with the Ambassador every night. The upper servants were in knee-breeches and black silk stockings, and the footmen were powdered. It struck awe into the Ministers of the Porte, who had never seen anything of the kind before. At one of the State dinners I saw a Pacha go up to a footman who stood on duty in the corridor, look at him as one would at a wax figure, and then raise his hands and feel his hair. The man bore it without moving a muscle of his face, and the Pacha gave it up. He evidently could not account for the young face and the white hair. I fancy that this régime of London state began and ended with Lord Lyons. It is a difficult thing to set on foot in a foreign

country, and neither his predecessors nor his successors have attempted it.

"It was at one of these State dinners that Toby made his first assault. We became suddenly aware that he was in the room. He was flipped out with discreet napkins, and I hoped that his presence had not been noticed; but after the guests had departed Lord Lyons said, 'Did a dog come into the dining-room to-night?' We said we thought one had—possibly it might have been Toby. 'You know,' said His Excellency severely, 'that I do not like dogs in the house.'

"A few days afterwards Lord Lyons said to me, 'That dog has been in my room this afternoon.' 'Toby!' I asked in consternation, 'how did he get in?' 'I don't know,' said Lord Lyons. 'He seemed to poke the door open with his nose.' 'What did he do when he got in?' I asked. 'He wanted to play with me,' said his lordship. 'He was very tiresome; I had to carry him out of the room in my arms' These were the *premières armes de Richelieu*. Toby had made up his mind to conquer the Ambassador, and he succeeded.

By degrees the dog's insistent call on His Excellency's attention won his affection. A dog cannot be credited with hypocrisy, and though Lord Lyons' dislike to dogs in general remained, it succumbed to the irrefutable and persistent proofs of Toby's affection for him. He gradually became a drawing-room dog instead of a stable dog; napkins no longer flipped him into outer regions. Many months elapsed before he was secure of his position. It was intensely interesting to watch his progress. When we were at Therapia in the summer Lord Lyons was fond of going out in the Embassy caique. It was a grand boat, all white and gold, with ten rowers and a helmsman like a Venetian picture. The Ambassador sat on a broad seat in the stern, cushioned in red and gold, with a couple of his secretaries at right angles to him. Toby came bounding down and jumped in. 'Certainly not,' said Lord Lyons, 'I will not have that dog in the boat.' He was hauled out, and as we rowed away he stood on the quay and cried. The next time we went out Toby, nothing daunted, waited his opportunity.

He did not attempt to get in till we were under way, and as the oars shot the caique from the side he made a spring and landed on Lord Lyons' knees, and then up round his neck and kissing him delighted; and Lord Lyons not able to put back and obliged to submit, and the horrid dog sitting by him on the state cushions, and taking an intense interest in everything, turning up his eyes constantly to the Ambassador, and asking him about this and that as only a dog can, mute but unspeakably expressive, was a sight not easily forgotten. Nevertheless, Toby never completely established his position at Constantinople. He was tolerated, he was accepted as an apparently unavoidable nuisance. He was always obliged to *enfoncer les portes*. He did it with a perseverance which brought its ultimate reward. In the end they were opened to him by the powdered footmen as widely as to the Ambassador himself. There was a critical moment when Lord Lyons was removed from being Ambassador at Constantinople to be Ambassador at Paris. Toby the first had been left at Washington; precedent was against Toby the second

leaving the post. However, one day Lord Lyons said, 'Is that dog to go too?' and so the matter was settled. The struggle was still existent, but by this weak word Lord Lyons finally lost his vantage. Toby came with us, and from that time was master. Very soon after our arrival in Paris he took supreme command. Mr. Tanfield, the steward, who had always been jealous of his growing favour, and had been very uncivil to him, tacked unblushingly, and said, 'If I had foreseen the position that Toby would assume I should have behaved differently to him.' For, indeed, at the time when he said this, Toby went out daily in the barouche with Lord Lyons to the Bois, and if he happened not to be forthcoming when the carriage came round, the start was deferred till Toby chose to appear. There was only one point on which Lord Lyons remained adamant to the end—he resented any expression which attributed ownership to him. He invariably said, 'He is not my dog. He chooses to come with me, but he does not belong to me. I hate dogs, and would never have one of my own.' Nevertheless they

were inseparable to a degree which attracted public attention, and the apotheosis of Toby was a leading article about him in the *Figaro*, one of those not unkindly *jeux d'esprit* which have no counterpart in our newspaper literature. It began somewhat as follows: 'In the most aristocratic street of Paris there is a magnificent house between court and garden. If a passer-by asks who lives there, the answer given will be, "Toby et puis l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre."' Then followed the justification of Toby being mentioned first, grounded on his all-powerful position as controller of the leisure moments of the Ambassador. It was a friendly article, for Lord Lyons was popular in Paris, and there was not a word in it casting ridicule on the Ambassador for his affection to his canine friend. I think that it is the only instance of an influential newspaper dedicating a leading article to a dog, and the fact entitles Toby to be ranked as an historical dog. Prince Bismarck's dogs, Rebecca and Tyras, have had many more paragraphs about them, but they have never had an article all to themselves.

"Toby lived to a ripe old age, and died deeply regretted by all who knew him. He is buried in the centre of the lawn of the Embassy garden at Paris, but no grave marks the spot. Yet he was worthy of an epitaph which might run as follows:—

'HERE LIES
T O B Y .
A DOG, BORN IN HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES,
WHO,
BY STRENGTH OF CHARACTER,
AN HONOURABLE AMBITION,
AND UNCEASING PERSEVERANCE,
CONQUERED
THE LASTING AFFECTION
OF A
POWERFUL PATRON
WHO HAD HITHERTO BEEN INIMICAL TO
THE CANINE RACE.'"

"It looks well at a distance," said Whiffles.
"But capital letters do not make capital epitaphs."

CHAPTER VI

LORD BROUGHAM—BERLIN, ETC.

"NO one can make epitaphs nowadays," I resumed. "The art seems to have died with the eighteenth century. Macaulay tried his hand. His are the best of our day, but they fade in the brilliancy of Jonson and Johnson and intervening literary giants,—whose grace, precision, and epigrammatic strength seem to be beyond reproduction——"

"You say 'our day.' You can hardly speak of Macaulay as being of your day."

"Yes, indeed, I remember Lord Brougham refusing to ask him to a dinner party on the ground that he would usurp all the conversation to himself."

"What had you to do with Lord Brougham?"

"My mother was his stepdaughter, and my childhood was to a great extent passed in his house. I still think of him with awe."

"He was a great man."

"His intellect was great—his temper prevented him from being a great man. There was a time when his popularity was such that the highest things were expected of him—crowds would gather round his house and wait to see him come out. His carriage was followed in the street; his name became a tavern sign. It may be said of him that he strode to the Woolsack, but his arrogant and domineering character made him an impossible colleague, and after the Government in which he was Chancellor fell, he was never again admitted to office.

"He lived at No. 4, Grafton Street, a good house with large drawing-rooms, which has since his death been turned into a club-house, and has sheltered many evanescent clubs. Among others the St. James' Club took refuge there when it quitted its first abode in St. James' Street, and after the reverence, not unmixed with fear, with which I always regarded the place in my childhood, it was a strange sensation to find myself, as a member of the club, playing whist in my grandmother's bedroom.

"The whole place frightened me as a child. It seemed so big and gloomy. In the morning my brother and I used to be made to go into the room where Lord Brougham was at breakfast, to say 'Good-morning' to him. He would look at us from under his bushy eyebrows, and say almost immediately, with a strong Scottish accent, 'That will do, ye may go away.' My remembrance of his appearance is concentrated in those thick eyebrows and his black and white check trousers, immortalised by *Punch*. He was delightful in conversation when he was amused, but nothing stirred him to this lighter mood but the company of outsiders. He would sit through the family dinner in absolute silence, broken by occasional outbursts of rage at some trivial mistake in the service on the part of the servants. He would suddenly hollo at them, calling them brutes and beasts if they handed him salt instead of pepper, and this holloing when he was angry inspired me as a child with terror, so that I never entertained for him any other feeling than fear.

"Once, when my brother and I were small boys

at Eton, he came down on the 4th of June with my mother and Alfred Montgomery. We went to the Brocas in a carriage to see the boats go up to Surley, they in the carriage, we two on the box by the driver. Presently Lord Brougham stood up. 'Boys,' he said, as if he were beginning a speech, 'it is, I believe, customary to make a present. I have brought something for you,' and he placed in our hands two bits of paper wrapped and enclosing something hard. It is undoubtedly an immemorial custom when you go to Eton to see lads who are at the school to give them money, but the expectations generally rise to gold. When Lord Brougham put these bits of paper into our hand we at once by their feel knew that they could not contain gold, and were moved by an immediate sinking of respect towards a donor who could offer us half-crowns. It went to zero when, on unfolding the paper, we found that Lord Brougham had presented us with a halfpenny apiece, and, adding insult to injury, he laughed immoderately at the joke. He had such a quaint face that we began at last to laugh too, though it was not in us to feel as

merry as he did. When the evening was over and we were saying good-bye, Alfred Montgomery drew us away for a second and said, 'I am not as rich as Lord Brougham, but I can give you a penny apiece instead of a halfpenny,' and he also put into our hands something wrapped up in paper. Unwarned by deception we still believed, and put the papers gloomily into our pockets, but with half-muttered thanks, and then good-night and good-bye; but as we sauntered up the High Street to regain our tutor's my brother undid his paper with the announced intention of shying the penny into Barnes' Pool, together with Lord Brougham's halfpenny, but lo! and behold, instead of a penny the paper contained a golden sovereign. I quickly undid mine, and another glimmered in the lamplight, so after all we went to bed happy.

"My mother told me a story of Lord Brougham, which illustrates his fantastic and ungovernable temper. She went with him to Paris at the time when the Spanish marriages were nigh leading to war between France and England. They were invited by Lord Normanby, who was then our

Ambassador, to dine at the Embassy. It was a large dinner party, and it so happened that on the same evening there was to be a ball at the Tuileries, to which they were also invited. In the course of the evening Lord Normanby took my mother aside, and telling her that relations were so strained between the two Governments that neither he nor any of his staff intended to go to the Court ball, asked her if she would use her influence to prevent Lord Brougham from going. He dwelt upon his high position, and expressed the hope that he would follow the lead of the Embassy by not appearing at the king's ball. He ended by saying to my mother that as she was the wife of a diplomatist he was sure that she would understand the situation, and that he felt that he might count on her not to go herself. My mother, who was then a young married woman of some twenty-six years, asked Lord Normanby to speak about it to Lord Brougham himself. He replied that he had done so, but had met with so little success that he was obliged to invoke her assistance. The party broke up, and on leaving, my mother spoke to Lord

Brougham. He at once broke out in a temper, and said he should certainly go, and that she should go too. Now my mother was a woman of no common character; she had equally a will of her own, and she replied that she would not go. By this time they were in the carriage whirling down the Faubourg St. Honoré.

“‘You will not go?’ he cried.

“‘No, I will not!’ said my mother. ‘Lord Normanby has desired me not to go on account of my husband being in the service. I will wait in the carriage, or it can take me home and go back for you.’ Lord Brougham turned on her like a madman.

“‘You shall not wait in the carriage. Get out! Get out at once!’ He was pulling violently at the check-string. The carriage stopped, he banged open the door, and before my mother had time to think of what was passing she found herself in the street, Lord Brougham shouting at the coachman to drive on to the Tuileries, and the carriage disappearing in the distance. It was a bitterly cold night. She was in evening dress, with nothing but

a shawl thrown round her bare shoulders. In the most familiar town she had never been able to find her way; in Paris she was simply lost. She stood on the pavement dazed, and then began running, and by a fortunate chance, though it added to her fright, she ran into a man's arms who promptly addressed her—

“‘My Lady, *que faites vous ?*’ She looked at him, and he explained that he was one of the Embassy servants and had recognised her. With his help a *voiture de place* was obtained and she drove to Meurice's Hotel, where she was staying. My mother was accustomed to storms, but this was more than she could bear, and some days passed before she would see Lord Brougham. The peace was eventually made by Lord Douro, who was a constant *habitué* in Grafton Street, and he happened to be in Paris at the time. He brought about a reconciliation, but only on the basis of the subject not being alluded to by either of them again. There was happily a solid affection between them. In speaking of him to me my mother would often quote Göthe's

words, 'Viel Licht viel Shatten,' as being applicable to him.

"My brother and I once incurred his displeasure in a way which showed that he had feeling as well as temper. We were at Eton in 1852, at the time of the Duke of Wellington's death, and Lord Douro kindly sent us three tickets for the funeral service at St. Paul's. We laid our heads together and resolved to offer the third to our tutor, the Rev. W. G. Cookesley. He was an eccentric man, who would occasionally have us flogged without rhyme or reason, but, on the whole, loved us dearly, and we reciprocated his affection. He was delighted to go to the funeral, and we went to town by the South Western on the afternoon of the day before it was to take place. We got out at Vauxhall and walked quietly towards the bridge. In those days there was a toll payable at the further end. As we came on to the bridge he began to walk faster, and when he was about ten paces ahead of us he suddenly turned round and said, 'Now, boys, whoever gets to the other den last shall pay the toll.' With that he caught

up his swallow-tails, took off his hat, and ran as fast as he could go along the crowded bridge. Under less uneven circumstances I suppose our young legs would have passed him ; but a moment or two elapsed before we gathered what he meant, and by that time he had gained a start which enabled him to come in a triumphant first.

"We put up at Grafton Street, and my tutor left us with an arrangement that he was to come in the morning at seven o'clock to take us to the Cathedral. We were up betimes, but no tutor appeared. Eton boys are pretty independent, and when half-past seven came and there were still no signs of him, we sallied forth by ourselves, and made our way with difficulty to St. Paul's, through the dense masses of sightseers. We found my tutor in the seats allotted to us, under the dome. He explained that the police would not let his cab pass, and that therefore he had not been able to get to us. The one point which fastened itself upon my memory in that great ceremony was, strange to say, an incidental trifle. Everyone present in the vast concourse which filled the

cathedral was furnished with the words of the service printed on two or three leaves of large square form, and each time that the moment arrived for a leaf to be turned, there came as the sound of the fall of sudden rain throughout the aisle and transept; it was produced by the simultaneous turning of the myriads of leaves.

"As soon as the funeral was over we walked down Ludgate Hill, which was still kept by troops, and my tutor would run from one side to the other to greet the officers in command, who seemed to be rather embarrassed by his effusive recognition.

" 'So glad to see them,' he said to us, 'all my own boys.'

"It was one of the regiments of Guards, and most of the officers had been at Eton. He remembered their names and nicknames and called them 'Johnny, Harry, Curly, and Scraggy' as the case might be—a quaint epilogue to the historical scene we had just witnessed.

"He left us shortly afterwards and we threaded our way home. When we arrived in Grafton Street we found Lord Brougham in the hall

looking dark and lowering, and the storm burst upon our devoted heads. What did we mean by leaving the house when our tutor did not come to fetch us? We might have been crushed and killed in the crowd. We were under his care. What was he to say to our mother if anything had happened to us? and so forth, till we slunk up to our rooms alarmed but unresentful, for, though boys, we felt that anxiety for our safety was the cause of his anger.

"This was not the only trouble which we incurred through the funeral. A fortnight later we received a letter from our father, and its contents vexed and harrowed our young souls, for we had nothing to urge in our defence. He had received a letter from Lord Douro telling him that he had sent us the tickets, and that he thought that we might have had the grace to let him know that we had received them, even if we did not think that they required thanks. I can still feel the hot blood of shame and contrition which rose to our cheeks as we read the letter with the severe words which our father added to Lord Douro's. We had acted

with the thoughtlessness of boys, but we were pulled up with a round turn which gave us a lesson in form for the rest of our lives. The Duke of Wellington, as he then became, forgot or forgave our bad manners. I saw little of him in later life, but he was always kind to my brother, who went into the Guards. He was a man who would have made a name for himself if he had not been overshadowed by the greatness of his father; if he had not been born to everything to which man can aspire. He had always been an habitué of Grafton Street, and one of the few who remained attached to Lord Brougham and fond of his society, notwithstanding his eccentricities of temper. I was once in the drawing-room with my grandmother, Lady Brougham, when he came in to pay her an evening visit, and as I remember it, he was in the Windsor uniform. While he was talking, the weird sound of the voices of newspaper vendors came from the street announcing important news. The curiosity of Lady Brougham was aroused, and Lord Douro volunteered to go down to buy the paper. An interval passed; we heard the front

door slam with considerable emphasis, and Lord Douro reappeared with a quaint expression on his face of mingled irritation and amusement. 'Here is the paper,' he said. 'What do you think the newsman did? He took me for the footman, and said, "Take it up to your missus."'

"My grandmother had been, I believe, a beautiful woman in her youth. Her first husband was Mr. Spalding, of the Holme, a fine Scottish estate in Kirkcudbrightshire. She was the mother of 'Jack' Spalding, one of the handsomest men of his day; a beau and a dandy of the thirties. His portrait by Count d'Orsay shows a singularly handsome face. He took great pains with his dress, and wore his hat much on one side. It fell to my lot as a lad, once or twice to walk down St. James' Street with him, and on these occasions I felt it my duty to hold myself very straight, and to try and look as if I were not quite unworthy to walk beside such splendour. He married a beautiful wife, Miss Upton, a daughter of Lord Templetown, and they must have been as handsome a couple as you could find in Merrie England. Her portrait is in Heath's

Book of Beauty, of 1843, with some pretty lines by
Arthur Hume Plunkett.

“ ‘ One glance upon that placid brow
Serenely calm it meets our gaze,
And own we not that England now
Boasts daughters fair as in those days
When Avon's mighty Bard gave forth
To earth, in native love and duty,
That his brave island of the north
Was richest in the gift of beauty.

“ ‘ Portia and Juliet, all the train
Of radiant beauty that he sang,
Rose from those flowers that not in vain,
Living, along his pathway sprang.
Theme for that Monarch Poet's lyre,
Could mighty Shakespeare breathe this hour,
Another dream you might inspire
Of beauty bright and matchless power.’

“ When I see elderly ladies now, my mind is apt to draw from their features a picture of days gone by, and to credit them with charms which have waned; but boys have none of this gallantry; and it never occurred to me to see any beauty in my grandmother. I was, however, aware that its remains were carefully nurtured. In those days

rouge and cosmetics were the fashion, and I remember her standing before the looking-glass in the drawing-room as she was starting for a party at Lady Jersey's and adding a little more colour where she deemed it necessary. When all seemed in order she turned round to me laughing, and said, 'One must do the best one can for oneself; no one thanks you for looking ugly.' There was much common-sense in the remark in its general application. It is questionable whether personal appearance is helped after sixty by rouge and powder and wig, but no doubt much depends upon fashion, and they were the fashion then."

"Not now?" said Whiffles with a twinkle in his eye.

Disregarding his impertinent remark I went on. "Lord Brougham was famous for his sallies of wit in general society, but he seldom favoured his family with any, and when he did there was generally something grim about them. I remember his coming into the drawing-room one evening dressed in uniform, returning from some official dinner. Lady Brougham was reclining, as was

her wont, on a *chaise longue* by the fire. He drew his sword, advanced towards her, pointed the tip within an inch of her bosom, and addressing her in his Scottish accent, said, 'Now, milady, shall I send you to the nether regions sooner than ye'll naturally go there?' Nether regions was not the term he used, but the sense was the same. 'Other days other ways.' Lord Brougham was a product of the mighty revolution of thought, which in France dyed the close of the century in blood. He had crossed the channel as a lad, and had heard Mirabeau. Happily for him our serener political atmosphere permitted him to thunder in the impassioned language of the French Convention without the same consequences; and his violence and temper will be pardoned by history, when it is remembered that they were enlisted in the cause of the reform of flagrant abuses of his time, and of the spread of education among the masses. A boon of a very different kind has secured his memory in my grateful affection. I often spent the winters, when I was a boy, in the beautiful home which he had

built at Cannes, in the vain hope of prolonging the life of his daughter Eleanor, to whom he was devotedly attached. The glow of those sunny shores and the fragrance of the orange blossom never faded from my memory; and now, in the evening of my life, when the trouble and the toil are all passed, I have realised an undefined hope, which never left me, to live where I could again inhale that fragrance, and watch once more the sunset behind the outline of the Esterelles.

"Talking of the Duke of Wellington's funeral reminds me that I have often thought that I am probably the only man alive or dead who has been present at the funerals of the three most famous military commanders of the age—the Great Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, and Field-Marshal von Moltke. In the case of Napoleon I may be deemed to be stretching a point, as he died in 1821; but it so happened that as a child of three years old I was in Paris at the time of the translation of his remains to the Invalides, in 1840. I do not pretend to remember it, but I like to record the fact that my parents had a

window looking on to the procession as it passed, and that I have been credibly informed that I was held up at that window by my nurse, and that therefore I must have seen it. Field-Marshal Von Moltke's funeral took place while I was Ambassador at Berlin, and I had the honour to represent the Queen at the ceremony. Besides these I have been present at the funerals, taking them in their order as they came, of Mgr. Guibert, Archbishop of Paris, murdered by the Communards, Victor Emmanuel, Pope Pius the IXth, King Louis of Bavaria, and the German Emperors, The Great William and Frederick the Good, so that it has been my singular chance to see many of the greatest heroes and paladins of the century laid in their graves.

"Of all these, the funeral of the noble and ill-fated Emperor Frederick evoked the most grief. I had occasion, on the morning after his death, to see Prince Bismarck. We walked up and down the long, covered walk which flanks the garden of the historic residence of the Chancellor in the Wilhelmstrasse, and I own that I was surprised at the emotion which he evinced; not only were his

eyes dim, but the tears fell down his cheeks. The whole scene was strange, for while this silent and incontrovertible evidence of his grief lasted during our conversation, no word passed between us regarding the death which occasioned it—our interview was akin to the subject, but a pathetic restraint was on us to hinder the name of the Emperor being mentioned, lest the business on which I had come, and which it was necessary to conclude, should dissolve in tears. The Emperor Frederick had about him something which we are wont to associate with the mythological heroes of the dim past, with the time of the twilight of the gods; gentleness, strength, and courage blended, as in the heroes of whose lives nothing but these qualities descend as an inheritance. His death was like the passing of Arthur, or the withdrawal of Lohengrin.

* * * *

"On quitting Prince Bismarck I walked down the street some two hundred yards, past the Foreign Office, past the Ministry of the Interior,

and arrived at my own residence, the British Embassy, a handsome building, with Greek columns on the façade. It is a good house, with many points to commend it, first among which is that the numerous reception rooms are all on the ground-floor. I commend this arrangement for all Embassies. One of the ever-recurring honours which fall upon Ambassadors is the reception of Sovereigns and Princes, and it is a matter of great convenience to be able to receive them without going downstairs, not as a question of movement from the upper to the ground-floor, but as a matter of etiquette. In the case of Sovereigns the rule is clear—you must receive them at the entrance; but innumerable questions have arisen, in cases where the Ambassador resides on the upper floor, as to how far down the stairs he should come to receive lesser Princes.

“The size of the rooms at the British Embassy at Berlin is their redeeming point. They have no pretension to good taste. The house was built by a banker of vast wealth, named Strousberg, who for a time blazed like a comet in the financial world,

and at his zenith he built this fine house in the most aristocratic street in Berlin. He was not destined to enjoy it. His rapid rise to great wealth, and the gigantic schemes which he projected, attracted the jealousy of rival firms. He was thrown into prison on a charge of fraud, which many to this day declare to have been unfounded, and in prison he died. His fall brought with it the ruin of a number of the most wealthy and noble families of Berlin, for one of his leading ideas had been to engage the aristocracy in the great financial projects which he was attempting to float. This all happened long before I went to Berlin, but I had once seen Strousberg. I thought little of it at the time, but subsequent events made it a curious illustration of the vicissitudes of human life.

"I think it must have been in the autumn of 1874—I never thought of the incident till I was appointed to Berlin, which was in 1885, so that I am not sure of my date—anyway, on a cold autumn evening about that date I arrived, fasting and wanting warmth, at the hotel of 'The Three

Kings' at Basle. I found all the personnel of the hotel ranged in the hall, and as I approached an individual, who appeared by his assumption of importance to be the manager, he requested me to stand aside. I edged into a corner, supposing that a king or at least a prince was immediately behind me. As I looked a waiter advanced with a lighted candelabrum, descended the steps into the street, and returned ushering in a little elderly man in a very beautiful fur coat, followed by a comely young lady of Jewish type. They went upstairs, preceded by the candelabrum-bearer; the waiters dispersed. I emerged from my corner. I addressed the porter, who seemed to have regained the stolid aspect which became his calling, and asked him who it was who had just arrived. He seemed surprised at my question and replied, 'It is Herr Strousberg.' The name did not enlighten me. I said, 'Who is Herr Strousberg?' The porter seemed more and more surprised.

"'Don't you know,' he said, 'Herr Strousberg, of Berlin, the great financier?'

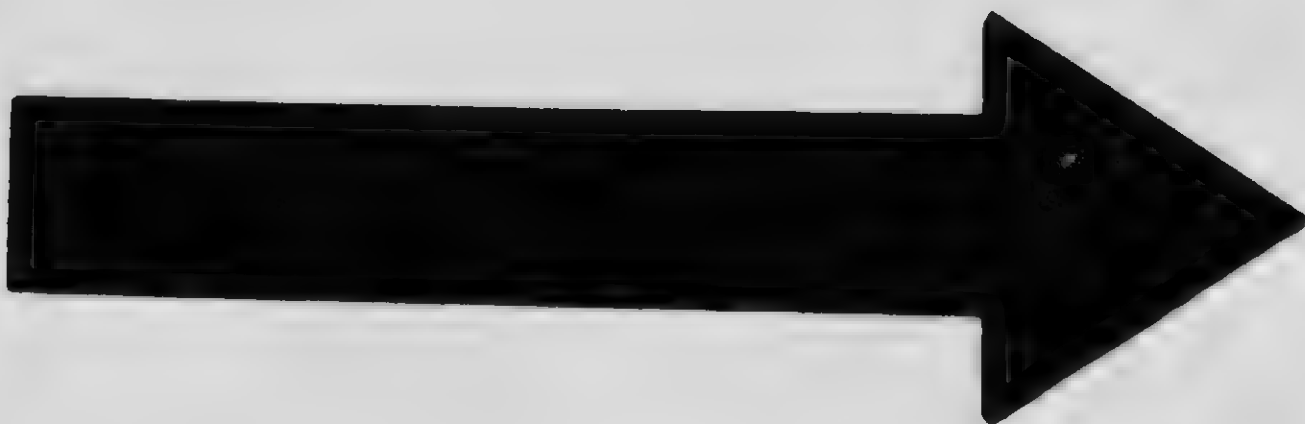
"'Ah!' I said. 'Well, now that Herr Strous-

berg, of Berlin, is disposed of, will you kindly give me a room, for I am cold and hungry?"

"I little thought at the time that the man on whose account I had been shoved aside had built a house for me to live in."

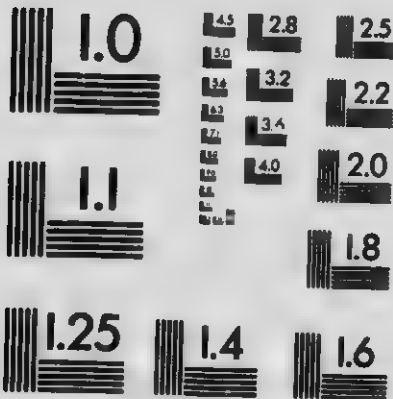
"Hullo!" said Whiffles, "you must really be more careful in your words. Leave to others to apportion the folly and the wisdom."

"I forgot," I said meekly. "I was really thinking of nothing but the fact. However, I accept the lesson. I was at Basle on my way to Milan, and am reminded by your remark that there I learnt another. I have already told you of two which were useful to me in life—one from Lord Lyons and one from the Duke of Wellington. The other that I am thinking of came from a housemaid, but before relating it I must enter a protest against the iconoclastic act of the proprietors of this same hotel of 'The Three Kings,' where I alighted. 'The Three Kings' from time immemorial an honoured sign of ancient hostelries. No one ever doubted who the three monarchs were. Every pious wayfarer was pleased to find shelter at the sign of the



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Shepherd Kings, Balthazar, Melchior, and what was the name of the other?"

"Gaspar," said Whiffles.

"Well, now forsooth, this is all changed; the sign of 'The Three Kings' remains, but we are told in the little guide-book which is given gratis to the guests that they were three German sovereigns, of whom only those well versed in history ever heard, who met on this spot to sign a treaty. The story is the invention of the 'progressive,' and an affront to those who love old traditions."

"And now onwards to the housemaid," said Whiffles, with an expectant gleam in his eye. "You have not favoured me with even the edge of a petticoat hitherto."

"I am afraid you will be disappointed, for she was middle-aged, shrivelled, and plain-featured."

"While touring in Italy in the year 1859 I went to the Hotel de la Ville, at Milan, and as soon as I had made myself comfortable after my long railway journey, I sallied forth to see the sights. Careless by nature and eager to be off, I left everything about in my room—portmanteau yawning, dressing-

case ajar, money on the table. I thought of nothing but being across the Alps and once more in Italy. Still I locked my door and took the key with me. Returning in time for dinner I mounted the stairs, strode down the corridor, and unlocking the door entered my room. I was immediately followed by the elderly and shrivelled housemaid. She was wringing her hands and seemed to be terribly agitated. 'Ah, mio signore,' she said, going up to the dressing-table and opening the little drawer. 'Is this yours?' In the drawer lay ten or a dozen gold pieces. 'Yes, certainly,' I said, 'they are mine.' 'Ah, signore,' she cried. 'How could you do it? How could you leave this money about? It was all lying on the table.'

"'Well,' I said, somewhat confused, 'I locked my door, I knew it was safe.'

"'No,' she cried, 'it was not safe, it was cruel to put such a temptation in my way.' She sank upon a chair and burst into tears. 'Think of me, signore, I am very poor, I have six children to keep and a husband who can do no work. This money would make me rich, and you leave it on

the table—the golden pieces—all loose—to dazzle my eyes and to put the devil into my heart. Through your thoughtlessness I might go to gaol, my children starve, and my husband die. Ah, signore mio, never do it again. Think of the poor, be merciful to us. Do not put temptation in our way.’ I sat down by the poor woman, took her hands in mine, and humbly begged her pardon.”

“Excuse me,” said Whiffles, “if I suggest that the anecdote is somewhat slender. It would do for a collection of hints to travellers when you have exhausted what is useful.”

“But really,” I urged, “it was useful to me. I had always been content to risk the result of carelessness to myself, but this little incident has prevented me since from leaving money about when I am travelling, for the reasons which the old woman put forward in an exaggerated form no doubt, but still true when stripped of their Italian warmth of expression.”

CHAPTER VII

NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

"I SUSPECT," said Whiffles, "that the housemaid's lesson was a trifle thrown away in some of your journeys, when, for instance, you were hunting buffalo in the far West. I should not mind your telling me a little about that to change the atmosphere. After funerals, fraudulent financiers, and housemaids one wants a little fresh air."

"In the spring of 1863 I left Washington with William Stuart, our Secretary of Legation, afterwards, as Sir William Stuart, British Minister at the Hague, and Dudley Ryder, who had an official appointment as judge in a slave trade commission at New York. We went first to St. Louis, where we engaged a hunter and teamsters, and struck for Leavenworth city. Here we heard that six days' travel across the plains would bring us to the region of buffalo, who at that season of the

year were making their way north. I am glad you let me talk about this expedition. As I look back, I am fain to confess that the happiest moments of my earlier days were those which I passed far from courts and capitals. Sleeping in the open air has an ineffable charm. It grows upon one till one hates the thought of four walls and a roof, and the recollection of days and nights spent in the open makes one's blood tingle with happy memories."

"I should imagine," said Whiffles, "that youth was necessary to a full enjoyment of that sort of life. How old were you then?"

"Twenty-five, and I am now past sixty; but if to-morrow circumstances should render a similar expedition possible I should undertake it with delight.

"On the 23rd of May, 1863, we struck off the high road which leads to Fort Kearney, and made for a river called the Republican Fork. In the afternoon we saw the land dotted with black spots about six miles ahead of us.

"'There they are,' cried our guide; 'those are

buffalo!' He was an ardent hunter, and the colour mounted into his face. We halted, got out our revolvers, loaded, and made away on our ponies in a great state of excitement. The buffalo were hidden from us now by a rise which we ascended silently, and from the top we saw a sight which remains fixed in my memory. In front of us was a herd of a hundred buffalo; on the left were a number of antelope playing about on the ridge; and below, in the valley between us and the buffalo, were a lot of wolves. Off we scampered, and off went the animals in their several groups. We made in the direction of the buffalo, and gradually got near. The guide was first. Suddenly his horse fell and he cut a somersault in the air, for we were going down a steep hill. As I came up he shouted, 'Go on, sir; you'll catch 'em!' At the bottom of the hill was a small stream, and there I did catch them. I singled out the one who was last over, and at twenty paces put four bullets into him. He was scrambling up the opposite bank of the stream, and my pony did not at all like crossing after him, with reason, for when I spurred him in

his fore feet sank down into mud, and I went over his head into the water. That was the end of my first buffalo hunt. If I had had any experience I should not have fired. It is useless to do so unless you are riding alongside of the buffalo and can aim beneath his shoulder. I hate wounding an animal, and my only comfort was that the guide said that a buffalo did not take any notice of a bullet unless it inflicted a fatal wound. The proper way is to single out one's buffalo, ride close up to him, and fire one's revolver into his side. The buffalo, on receiving the shot, wheels suddenly round and charges, but his run is generally exhausted in about forty paces, so that the rider, who has also turned his pony and ridden off, runs little risk.

"After we had each shot one buffalo we ceased to kill them, except in order to provision the camp, and we stalked them like deer. When a buffalo is mortally wounded by a hunter whom he cannot see, he whisks his tail about, looks to the right and left, and then stands still, holding his head down and bleeding to death from the mouth and nostrils; in ten minutes or so he will lie down, and in ten

minutes more he may be approached without danger. If he sees the hunter near he will make for him, and then absence of body is preferable to presence of mind, or if too far off he will scamper away in the opposite direction, and have vitality enough to get clear away and die among his companions. But this is all useless information now. Herds no longer cross the flowery plains. All the buffalo have been killed. On the expedition I am telling you about it took us ten days to get through the herd going northwards while we were going due west, and during those ten days the whole country, as far as the eye could reach, was dotted with them. In the evening we used to make up a good log fire, all gather round it, and there, with no noise to disturb us but the distant grunting of the buffalo and the half-heard howling of the wolves, we talked over the exploits of the day, drew stories from our men, and so chatted the hours away till it was time to turn in. Then, with a cheery 'Good-night,' we would roll ourselves in our buffalo robes, and sleep till sunrise on a bed of roses,—literally, for roses cover the flowering prairie."

"You spoke a little while back," said Whiffles, "of the frailties of heroes being obliterated by the bright traditions of their deeds. Much the same is the case with these episodes to which one looks back; one forgets the annoyances, and remembers only the pleasures. How did you like the rain? for of course it did rain, and you had no fire by which you could dry yourselves."

"It did rain," I confessed, "and always at night. The first thing to do on pitching our tent was to select an incline, and to dig a trench all round the ground. It came in torrents almost every night, but the days were nearly invariably fine."

"Well, if you had rain, you had rheumatism. Even if you could keep out the stream, the ground must have been damp."

"I don't think any of us had rheumatism, but Judge Ryder nearly died. It came about in this wise. I had with me four books—the Bible, Shakespeare, *Cranford*, and Galton's *Art of Travel*. Now the latter is a wonderful guide to all tyros in the art of roughing it. It teems with practical

advice. I was very proud to have the book with me. I conned its pages and found out how to make a fire, how to bake bread, how to dig a hole in the ground as a socket to one's hip for the night, how to cross rivers, how to find out their breadth, and a host of other useful things, but alas I also found a receipt for a pleasant beverage—vinegar, brown sugar, essence of ginger, and water. Much delighted, I hastened to give it all round, for we had the ingredients by us. I do not say that it was *propter hoc*, but it was certainly *post hoc*, that same night that Judge Ryder was taken with mortal pains. For a week we were in sad anxiety. The spot on which this misfortune befell us was the furthest point of our travel. As soon as he was able to move, we had to wend our way slowly home: instead of realising our intention of pushing on to Denver.

"We had with us a small cellar of whisky; the men liked it (and we liked it too). We reckoned the days we proposed to spend on the plains, and the time that our provisions would last us. It was calculated to suffice for a glass of whisky to each member of the

expedition per day, and accordingly this glass was dealt out to each one at eventime. After we had been a week on travel our hunter came to us with a petition. He said, with much circumlocution, that our system of doling out the whisky showed that we did not understand the situation. He understood the principle on which we acted, but the principle was wrong. Our men would be quite content to go through their work without any whisky, but if we were so good as to give them whisky, they would like to have enough to make it worth while to drink it. We gave them a glass a day—there were six glasses in a bottle; would we give them each a bottle a week? It would be a good bargain to both, because we should gain a glass a week to each man, and they would once a week have as much whisky as they wanted. We were none of us versed in the ways of the country, and we made the apparently good objection that if the man drank his bottle off when he got it he would be drunk and useless; but our remark merely evoked a smile from our hunter, which, though it betrayed disbelief of our know-

ledge in these matters, conveyed also the feeling that he might be better able to judge than we. It was so certain and so contemptuous. He said that a bottle of whisky would not disturb their sobriety an inch, it would merely smooth their temper, and make them more willing to work. We yielded, gave a bottle to each man every Saturday night, and, as time went on, had to confess that the hunter knew more about whisky drinking in those parts than we did, for although there was no concealment about the men drinking off their bottles when they got them, they never seemed a whit the worse or less capable of doing their duty.

"But what you said just now about only the pleasant part of adventures remaining on the memory is true. I remember once at Buenos Ayres being in a small company, among which was the captain of the English gunboat on the station. He had to go to sea that night to cross to Monte Video, and he said that he expected a rough night, as the barometer had suddenly gone down to nowhere. Although the distance from Monte Video

to Buenos Ayres is about fifty miles, only an arm of the sea, the mouth of the great River Plate, lies between them, so that the severest storm can hardly be dangerous. Thinking that I should like, under these favourable circumstances, to see the elements at their worst on board ship I asked the captain to let me go with him, and he readily assented. By the time we were on board the sky was murky black, and the wind was raising the sea all it could. For a long time the distant roll of thunder could be heard, then the steady wind changed to gusts, driving the spray before them; at last, about midway across, the thunderstorm caught us—streak upon streak of lightning, and a continuous roll of the artillery of heaven, quick following terrific claps and dying rumble. We were seated in the cabin at a table which went round the mast. Suddenly a crack like that of a thousand whipcords came in our centre, and sent us reeling off our chairs—the lightning had struck the lightning conductor which passed down the mast.”

“Delightful to look back on,” said Whiffles.

“Oh, perfect,” I replied. “Then, on reaching

Monte Video, we went off in a small boat belonging to the ship on a shooting expedition—two guns and five men. We made for a small river some twenty miles up the coast, and capsized in trying to enter it. The officer with me gave the order for everyone to get rid of his boots. I had Wellingtons and could not obey. Luckily all could swim; we were only about fifty yards from the shore. I stuck to the boat, which was keel upwards; one of the sailors got hold of the painter, tied a rope to it, and swam ashore. We were all safe enough, but it was ten o'clock at night, no moon, and a barren coast with narrow sands and overhanging cliffs. We set to work with a will and hauled the boat up; being upside down the things in it tumbled out, with the exception of my gun. It was in a leather case with a handle, which kindly got entangled in a rope, and came ashore with the boat. The same thing happened to a demijohn of whisky, and I regretted to see one of the sailors, instead of helping us, sit down on the sand, tilt up the demijohn, and pour the contents down his throat. When another followed suit we had

to intervene. A drink was allowed all round, but time was called; then we set off along the sands. It was a cold September night, early spring in those parts, and presently the moon rose. After two or three miles we came to a river, shallow, but deep enough to chill us to the bone in the dim morning as we waded through. The overhanging cliff seemed to have no end; it was as if we were walking round England. A man clambered up, but came down again in five minutes footsore. I was the only one who had boots, because I had not been able to get rid of them when we capsized; so I scrambled up the cliff and walked along the top, looking for a habitation. I saw one in the distance shortly before the sun rose, and shouted to my companions to come up. The building, the white outline of which I had descried, proved to be the estancia, or farm, of an Englishman. By the time we reached it we were so cold that we could only chatter our explanations, but in five minutes we were all aglow with British hospitality—whisky and blankets and beds—and how we slept! It was well over noon when we woke, and

half an hour afterwards we were out on an ostrich hunt with our hospitable host."

"It is curious," said Whiffles, "that these little personal adventures, which are hardly worth recording, should cause your eye to brighten, and give to your words an animation which was somewhat lacking before."

"Shall I tell you," I said, "what I take to be the chief cause of the hold which incidents of this kind, however insignificant you may consider them, have upon the memory? We are all gregarious animals, but class, especially in England, sets up barriers which stop the highway. Nothing breaks them down but unavoidable community of action. You may love John Scott or Jim Snooks with your eye, but their way of expressing themselves is alien to yours. You remain apart for ever, unless difficulty or danger brings you shoulder to shoulder, and forces you to united action and mutual assistance. This gives the level, and you find yourself suddenly walking along the path of human affection and sympathy, unimpeded by the boulders and rocks which shyness, or the difference of station and

means has thrown between you. The charm of adventure is the way in which it lays man's nature bare. The tinsel and embroidery of convention vanish—courage, resource, chivalry, and all the good qualities, suddenly leap to the front; the bad ones cower, slink, and often die. In the flash of emergency many a half-and-half man has been made whole."

"The members of the Diplomatic Service," said Whiffles, "are at a greater disadvantage than others in mixing with their fellows. In England people are thrown together by hunting, cricket, football, and a hundred ways of amusing oneself, which are not open to the staff of an Embassy or Legation."

"There may be something in that," I replied, "but at the same time I cannot help saying that friendly communication between different classes seems to me to be easier abroad than it is at home. The prince of countries in this regard is of course the United States. There every man considers himself on a par with his neighbour, and lets him know it. The relief is such as one feels on taking off one's uniform after a court ball."

"It is true," said Whiffles, "that the ceremony of European life disappears, and you, individually, may enjoy the change, but many resent the loss of independence, which is one of the benefits of class distinctions. In the United States, whether you like it or not, you are at the beck and call of everyone who chooses to address you. If you happen to be eminent, your life is made a burden to you by your value for 'copy.' I should be inclined to reduce your valuation of such joys by a large figure under the head of love of change."

I resented his assigning this commonplace cause to my emotion over the freedom of intercourse, but was hampered in an apt reply by the obtruding reflection that love of change is indeed part and parcel of my nature, and I was quite ready to acknowledge it.

"To me," I said, "change and rest have all my life been convertible terms. I will give you an extreme instance. In the spring of 1870 I was overworked at Paris, not ill, but longing for rest from the daily routine. I felt that if I could only get two days away it would revive my jaded

energies. I obtained Lord Lyons' permission to absent myself for so long, and I took the train straight to Bordeaux, supped, slept, rose early, and was back in Paris next evening refreshed and reinvigorated in mind and body. The whirl of the train always had a soothing effect on me, and if I could have made out my journey so as to divide my thirty-six hours by running straight ahead for eighteen, and the other eighteen back, I should have done so by preference.

"And this love of change caused me to be delighted when I was appointed Secretary of Legation at Pekin in 1871. But delight of this kind is a jewel with facets—catch it in the glance of the sun and all is brilliant, but the brilliancy is the result of light alternating with the darkness which lurks in the cavities. My mother was strongly opposed to my going so far away. My services at Paris as *chargé des archives* during the Commune had, as it were, raised me from the ranks. I had been made a C.B., and my mother looked upon my appointment to Pekin as a cruel injustice. Her pain at the prospect of my going

so far caused the brilliancy of my jewel to fade as though someone had held up a hand between it and the light. She wrote to Lord Granville, who had offered me the appointment, entreating him to change my destination. He replied, somewhat nettled at the imputation that I was not being fairly treated, that he had offered me promotion over several of my seniors, and that I seemed quite willing to go to a post in which there was opportunity for me of my further distinguishing myself. Thus was I distracted between filial duty and personal inclination. Fortunately my mother was a woman of the highest intellect, though of the softest heart. She divined the wishes which my affection for her prevented me from expressing, and set herself to furnishing me with all those little articles for comfort and safety on a long voyage which had no other use than to remind me of a love which has been my guardian angel through life, standing between me and every act which could have given her pain.

"A happy thought struck me : if I was to go to China, why should I not take India on my way?

I went to Lord Hammond, who was then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He was a very powerful Under-Secretary. His abrupt and downright way of treating every matter on which he was approached had produced a sort of atmosphere of terror around him. Minor applicants did not venture to lay their little petitions before him. By degrees he had raised a complete wall between himself and frivolous applications, so I submitted my request to go to India to him with but small hope that it would be successful.

"He looked at me with his piercing eyes from beneath his beetle brows, 'What do you want to go to India for?' he asked. I replied that it was because the opportunity to do so presented itself, and because I thought that every Englishman, if such an opportunity did come to him, should avail himself of it, since by seeing India he could realise better than in any other manner the greatness of the Empire which each of us, in our small way, was called upon to endeavour to maintain.

"I saw his eyes glisten, he fumbled with his papers, there was a pause; what would he say?

What he did say was this, 'I am very glad. You may go through India, and we will pay your expenses.' And so it came about that instead of making straight for Peking I took ship to Bombay and traversed India from west to north and north to south."

"And your dreams," said Whiffles; "did they fade and die or become vivid and acquire substance?"

"At first they faded. In all distant countries in which I had met the Anglo-Saxon race, I had found it impressing its national characteristics, forcing its language and its customs. These capacities, which had hitherto appeared to me to be the sign and standard of its strength, were conspicuous by their absence. In India the English language has made less progress than in China. To the casual traveller there are no signs of the Christian religion having made much way amongst the natives. British customs appear to be confined to British homes. Directly you emerge from the eddies of British centres you are more abroad than in most countries of Europe or America. I own

that I was disappointed, but all the time I was looking in the wrong direction.

"When I was in Brazil my gaze stretched across the vast bay of Rio and rested on the Organ Peaks, a series of mountains of jagged form, towering into the air in pinnacles. They inspire one with an idea of the grandeur of nature beyond any other view that I have seen. One of my first objects was to examine them closer. Our mountain residence during the summer was at Petropolis, whence it was a day's ride to Theresopolis, a small colony of mountain residences standing immediately beneath these Organ Peaks. Thither I directed my steps on the first opportunity. We rode for hours through the jungle of tropical growth, and whenever we emerged upon a spot whence a view could be obtained I looked for the Peaks, but in vain. We knew that we must be near them, but we could see nothing. Naught met our eyes but summer clouds bounding the fringe of tropical verdure, when suddenly we became aware that they were there, not on our eye line, but high in the air, towering above the clouds,

rosy in the light of the setting sun. We stopped, silent with awe and wonder. Below lay the bay, with white dots marking the town of Rio; beyond, in the far distance, the sea bounded by the horizon; in front a thin vapour thickening into white clouds, and high overhead the granite inaccessible pinnacles of the Organ Peaks emerging in brilliant light. Involuntarily my lips gave thanks to God for having allowed me to see the glory of the world."

"And the application?" said Whiffles, with a weird intuition of the object of this digression.

The remark saved me a lot of trouble. I felt that it would be a mere waste of time to explain to him at length that I had only failed to find what I expected in India, because I had looked too low. The grandeur was there, but it towered above the plane of commonplace expectation. It towered in the achievements of those to whom Great Britain owes the subjugation of this vast empire, from Clive to Dufferin, in the unceasing supply of statesmen, warriors, and civil servants which the mother country has furnished for a hundred and fifty years, in the difficulties they

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vanquished, in the fortitude, the courage, and the perseverance of the conquering race. These, indeed, stand up for ever in bold relief above the shifting clouds. They are the Organ Peaks of the Indian Empire.

"Yes," said Whiffles meditatively, and thought-reading. "I understand the drift of your parallel, but if the chief title to admiration on the part of India lies in its story of British conquest, you might have gained what you wanted to know from books, and have saved yourself the journey."

"No, sir," I replied, "that is not the case. If you go to the scene of the events, everything becomes easier of comprehension. The contrast between studying the history of a country before and after you have visited it is such as occurs when you look through good glasses at a distant view. It is brought close to you.

"And here let me again digress in order to dwell for a moment on the zest which travel gives to life. It lays up a store of interest which nothing but failing memory can reduce—an interest which is vigorous after you have retired from activity.

Take the case of an untravelled man who scans the *Times*—a great part of its contents has no attraction for him, because it deals with countries and subjects with which he is unfamiliar, while to you, who have been everywhere, there is not a paragraph that does not strike some vibrating cord of memory. The subjugation of the Island of Formosa is a matter of absolute indifference to our multitude, yet, granted that you have been there, the little paragraphs that appear about it from time to time have a vivid interest for you, and as your sympathies acquire a wider range, your prejudices, which in numberless cases are the offspring of ignorance, vanish. The material on which you found your judgment grows like a wall, brick by brick, till it becomes a rampart from which you may shoot the arrows of your opinion, sharpened by experience."

"I think," said Whiffles, "that you are a little hasty in placing confidence in that rampart. The ordinary education at home provides all who profit by it with a solid wall of defence in the conduct of life according to the English notions of morality

and honour. I would not give much for your rampart if you have taken out home bricks and filled the holes with foreign rubble."

I hesitated. Whiffles' words were calculated to open a controversy on the question of England against the world. I took the bull by the horns, and proceeded to state my honest opinion. I was the more moved to this course because it was not the first time that he had provoked me by posing as a British Philistine, while all the time I felt certain that this uncanny little man, who constantly probed and galled me, was cosmopolitan in his sympathies and opinions.

"On the point which you put to me," I said, "I am willing to grant, after wandering on the four continents for forty years, that, taken as a whole, our system of education is the best. It teaches equally the freedom which gives the intellect elasticity, and the restraint which imposes the desirable bounds. We have the advantage too of belonging to a country which has worked out its internal political problems, without violence, within the age of ourselves, our fathers, and our

grandfathers. When we reflect on the horrors and the bloodshed which have occurred in other countries in the course of their evolution, we rub our hands and say we alone know how to do it. So far our self-satisfaction may be justified; but when we go farther, and assume that other nations can show us nothing worthy of imitation, we prove ourselves indeed to be Britons, for there are millions among us who hold this opinion, but they are of an inferior brand. They are not the men who have made Great Britain what it is, for they lack two qualifications which more than any other have contributed to our success—sound judgment and the spirit of the explorer.”

“I know the cosmopolitan frame of mind,” shouted Whiffles. “It would like to graft foreign notions on the British Oak. It admires the decimal system and the codification of laws. It is attracted by the unwonted spectacle of family unity. The mother is not turned out of the ancestral home when she becomes a widow. It would like the British ear to be as musical as the Italian, and asserts that it is all a matter of education; cheap opera in all the small towns and music for the million are pleasant.

The Foreign Sunday has its advocates, so has conscription; a friend of mine, not a hundred yards off, shows sympathy with American freedom of communication between the classes. Some think that midnight in a foreign town is more wholesome than midnight in London. The Chinese mourn in white, many prefer it to black; universal suffrage is still happily an exotic, but there are those who wish to transplant it; even the referendum has its devotees. The——"

But I interrupted him. "In mercy's sake stop," I cried; "you remind me of the waters that come down to Lodore. I am shocked at having opened the sluices to such a cataract!" And I proceeded rapidly, as I could not hope to unravel the entanglement into which he had brought the discussion by mixing the aspirations of faddists with the main stream of the argument. "Let us drop the subject," I said.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE CHINA SEAS

"WHILE I was in China I made an excursion to the Island of Formosa, to which I alluded just now.

"I embarked at Tungchow, some fourteen miles from Peking, on the Chinese gunboat *Feehoo*, 250 tons, Captain Clayson, on the 25th of September, 1872. I will tell you all about our journey if you won't interrupt me, and if I can remember it."

"I have said that your memory depends upon me. It will be bright as long as you interest me and fade when you become tiresome ; so go ahead."

"We slipped down the river past the Taku forts, and on the following morning the chief officer woke me before sunrise, saying that we were nearing Ninghai, the spot where the great wall of China finds its end on the sea-coast, and sure enough, when I came on deck, there was the great

monster which I had seen before winding over the crests of mountains hundreds of miles inland—now dragging his slow length from the distant heights, and finally projecting himself into the ocean. This great wali, begun two hundred years before the Christian era, stretching 1,500 miles up hill and down dale along the northern boundary of China, and still standing. Perhaps the view of it at this spot, in the Gulf of Liao Tung, is the most impressive one which can be obtained."

"You merely say that," said Whiffles, "because so few people have seen it."

I was ready to admit that in making this remark Whiffles had hit upon a weakness common to many travellers. They are tempted to undue revels of description by a feeling of security from contradiction, and are apt to purr over the sensation of having seen what in all probability is excluded from the past and future of those to whom they are speaking. I stuck, nevertheless, to the truth of my assertion that the view of the great wall at Ninghai is the most impressive that can be obtained.

"The day was lovely. We entered the fort,

situated on the extremity of the rocks, walked out on to the portion jutting into the sea, and finally sat on the last stone above the sea-level and looked at the continuation of the foundation, large blocks of granite, visible a long way beneath in the clear blue water.

"Captain Clayson asked me if I would like to take a brick home with me and I accepted, little dreaming what that brick would do to me before the voyage was over. It was brought on board, and stowed away under my berth in the captain's cabin.

"And now I will relate a circumstance which I afterwards came to view with doubt and suspicion. Pirates were not yet exterminated from Chinese waters, the relation of their exploits was still a lively theme; so that I did not feel any surprise or distrust when the captain told me, with a grave face, that news had come to Ninghai that a piratical junk had been devastating the inland river at Niewchwang, the port in the north of the gulf to which we were bound. Captain Clayson was a sturdy young Englishman, with a frank and sailor-

like address, the sort of man to whom my heart instinctively went out. In all my wanderings officers of the naval service, whether Her Majesty's or another's, have had a great attraction for me—coming amongst them was like getting a whiff of one's native air; it braced and refreshed me.

“From the captain's account, it appeared that the pirates were not far up the river, and that as he was in command of a Chinese gunboat it became his duty to make an expedition with the object of capturing the junk and its crew, and he proceeded to sum up the forces which he could take with him. They consisted of himself and the English officer under him, two non-commissioned officers, and the crew of the pinnace. After beating about the bush a little with regard to the smallness of this attacking force he asked me if I would not mind joining, as they should be very glad to add to their number. ‘Of course,’ he said, ‘it all depends on what we hear when we get to Niewchwang; but if we are obliged to take the matter in hand I hope you would not mind going with us, for one man more or less might make a

the difference.' As a matter of fact, I did mind very much. It might be his duty to police the inland waters, it was certainly not mine; on the contrary, as Secretary of the British Legation, it was my duty to have nothing to do with local disturbances; and there was no doubt that if I went I should incur the blame of my superiors, and if I got into trouble, and were either wounded or killed, I should only be called a fool for my pains. I kept these reflections to myself and gave a general assent, to be controlled by what we heard when we got to Niewchwang. For the rest of the day the captain kept up a sort of 'sharper your cutlasses' conversation, flavoured with many tales of piratical adventure.

"On the following morning we landed at the little town of Niewchwang, which has grown up on a mud bank since the treaty of 1860, when the place was opened to trade. Our Consulate was in a pretty little Buddhist temple, and there we congregated to hear the news. After dinner a council of war was held to decide whether the *Feehoo* should send forth an expedition in the

early morning up the small river which stretched inland. The piratical junk, according to the latest news, was some twenty miles off. Its crew was estimated at anything between 50 and 300 and our force was to be about 12, all told, but we were to have a small cannon with us with which we were to sink the junk, as far as I could make out, and then keep clear while the enemy were being drowned. I observed that there was a good deal of half-heartedness in the discussion, and no decision was come to, but when we broke up I went off to bed in the Consulate on the understanding that I was to be awaked at sunrise, and to accompany the expedition if the expedition started.

"That was the last I heard of the piratical junk and the punitive expedition. I slept like a top and rose late, and when I met my friends nobody mentioned the subject till I broached it, when I was told that the *Feehoo* must go south as quickly as possible, and that it had been decided that there was not time enough to go after the junk. The whole matter was, in fact, dismissed with an

airy disregard of the gravity with which it had been treated on the previous day."

"It seems to me," said Whiffles, "that your pirate story comes to a somewhat lame and impotent conclusion."

"So it did to me at the time," I replied. "It was not till long afterwards that I found what I think was the key. Our trip, which lasted about three weeks, was on the eve of coming to a close. It had not been uneventful; we had encountered a cyclone, in which we were nearly lost; we had made an expedition into the mountain fastnesses of the savages in the Island of Formosa, and it came about that a tinge of sentiment hovered over the impending separation of our little party. On the evening before we arrived at Shanghai, where I was to quit the *Feehoo*, I took the opportunity over some whisky and water before turning in to tell Captain Clayson how sorry I was that the cruise was over, and how much I thanked him for all the pleasure it had given to me.

"'Well,' he said, 'it has been very different from what I expected.'

"‘You could hardly hope to have fine weather all the way, I said,’ thinking he alluded to the cyclone.

"‘Oh, I was not thinking of that,’ he said; ‘I mean about you.’

"‘What about me?’

"‘Well, you see, it was this way; you won’t mind my telling you that one likes to be master of one’s own ship, and it is not altogether pleasant to be told that you are to take aboard somebody whom you don’t know for a three-weeks’ cruise, and then you will pardon me again, but I have always hated official chaps—I just can’t stand their stuck-up ways and patronising airs, so when I got instructions to take you on board I was just wild, and I turned about in my mind how I could be as polite as they are made, and yet that you should want to leave the ship the first convenient port we got to. However, I am very glad you stuck to the *Feehoo*, and here is to our next cruise.’

"As we clinked glasses there was a gallop through my brain of the Niewchwang pirates on

the swiftest coursers making for begey-land, to which region they have ever since been relegated in my mind's eye.

"I have mentioned that we encountered a cyclone, and had I the pen of Tom Cringle I could give a thrilling description of it, for the winds and the waves re-enacted the most vivid features of the transpontine melodrama in its representations of a storm at sea. Finding that I was only in the way on deck when matters became serious I went below and to bed, for it was already late. The ship was pitching to her heart's content, or to be more accurate as if her back would break, when suddenly, for a moment, she seemed to steady herself. At the same instant there was the sound of a dead weight falling upon her from stem to stern. The door of my cabin was burst open, and the sea pouring in washed me out of bed before I knew where I was. I struggled to my feet; the darkness was complete except for a glimmer in the doorway through which the water was rushing in a cataract. I steadied myself against the bulkhead and suddenly got a

most fearful whack on the shins, caused by the brick from the great wall of China which I had stowed beneath my bed, and which was now surging to and fro with fiend-like velocity in the water as it sluiced hither and thither with each oscillation of the ship. I made for the companion-ladder, but the brick caught me again ere I reached it—maimed and bleeding I staggered on deck. There no soul was visible, nothing but inky darkness; the shrieking of the wind and howling of the waves, and the muffled sound of everything loose on deck careering up and down in the surge of the water which we had taken on board. So I remained for hours while the ship was fighting for its life with the tempest. No human sound reached me. By degrees the water flowed off and the vessel, which had appeared to be waterlogged, began to resume her buoyancy. The storm raged all through the night and abated at sunrise. When he could leave his post the captain came to me and told what had happened; he said that the fool of a man at the helm had let the ship go half a point off, with the consequence that a wave had fallen

upon us, and he added that if a second wave had fallen we should have gone to the bottom then and there.

"I fancy that there are few sensations so delightful as passing from storm, darkness, and cold to calm, sunlight, and warmth. At noon next day we were lying in smooth water, landlocked by numerous small and picturesque islands, and while the cyclone might be still spending its fury in distant seas we were busy and cheerful, obliterating all traces of the havoc which it had caused on board. The contrast between that noon and the previous midnight held an abiding place in my memory till years afterwards it found expression in verse.

"Tempest! The waves are crashing,
The wind screams through the shrouds;
The ship is heaving and dashing
As she points to the sea or the clouds.

"I am bruised and maimed, and I cry
In the agony caused by pain,
'Oh, God! I had rather die
Than go through this again.'

"Calm! We have ridden the waves,
The torn sails dry in the sun:
Thanks to the Power that saves
The haven of rest is won.

"The thought that I wished for the end
Has passed away like a breath;
I look in the eyes of a friend
And long for life, not death."

"If you repeat the verses to anyone else," said Whiffles, "you had better say nothing about the brick from the Great Wall. It mars their effect if one knows the immediate cause of the agony which made you wish to die."

I had not yet become so accustomed to Whiffles' sarcastic remarks as to listen to them without resentment, but on this occasion I thought I should best mortify him by assuming indifference, and I determined to proceed on the even tenor of my way. As I formed this resolution I heard him grumbling "venerable patriarch."

"Now," I said, "if you will allow me ten minutes' straight run I will tell you about our visit to the Island of Formosa, the next place at

which the *Feei* so touched; but I warn you before starting that if you break in with disagreeable questions or criticisms I shall leave off talking altogether."

"Nothing," said Whiffles, "ruffles a versifier so much as to meet with no laudatory remarks when he recites his effusions. I excuse your petulance, and undertake not to speak again until you give me leave."

I swallowed my wrath and put him to the test.

"The island is about 250 miles in length and about 100 miles in breadth at its broadest part. A chain of mountains traverses it lengthwise, dividing the east from the west. The east of this chain is mountainous and the west is a plain, smaller in area than the mountainous district and richly cultivated. The Chinese were masters of the plain, while the mountains have from all time remained in the hands of the savages, who have successfully resisted every effort to dislodge them. Notwithstanding their proximity to civilisation during centuries they have preserved their isolation, and

were, when we visited them, completely ignorant of the ways of the outer world. I do not know whether the Japanese occupation has made any change in these conditions.

"I started from Takou on the morning of the 17th of October, 1873, shortly before daylight, in company with the captain of the *Feehoo* and two other gentlemen, one of whom was a resident of Takou acquainted with the country and the local Chinese dialect.

"It is usual in Formosa to travel in chair palanquins, supported by three bearers. They are by no means comfortable, even when not in motion; but when they go along at a jog-trot the occupant is thoroughly miserable for the first day. Subsequently he gets accustomed to it. His bones become more pliant, or his pillows are more cannily arranged, or fatigue may have got the upper hand. To whatever cause it may be due it is certain that sleep, which at first would have been deemed impossible, will on the second or third day frequently rescue the traveller from thinking of the discomforts of his mode of progress. Walking is the best

escape, but only to be indulged in towards sunset and the early hours of the morning.

"The road lay through villages and one considerable town, filthy, like all Chinese towns. The country was beautiful, with crops, rice, and millet in the open; while the sides of the road were sheltered by cactus, pineapple, bamboo, and other shade-giving trees and shrubs. Towards evening we emerged from shady lanes into an open country. At a distance of fifteen miles a range of mountains shut in the view; between us and them nothing but waving fields of rice, and at intervals thick groves of bamboo. The husbandmen of the plain have their habitations in these groves, and towards one of them named Hoansia we bent our course.

"Arriving at this village at nightfall we were strangely impressed by hearing the solemn and familiar strain of the Old Hundredth rising fitfully through the thick growth of bamboos, guiding us to the home of the chief of the small community. The Presbyterian Mission has been exceptionally successful in Formosa, and, thanks to their labours,

our first night's halt was among Christian Chinese. The farmhouse of the headman was a quadrangle, one side of which formed the dwelling-house, in which the principal room was ornamented with engravings from the *Illustrated News*.

"Early on the ensuing morning we resumed our journey in the sedan chairs. For upwards of ten miles the road lay through richly-cultivated districts such as we had seen the day before, but as we neared the mountains the aspect of the plain changed. The hand of the husbandman seemed to have relaxed its grasp; the soil, apparently as rich as any we had passed through, remained untilld; no bamboo groves diversified the landscape; wild nature was tenant of the land. We had reached the neutral zone between the conquered and unconquered parts of the island. Behind us were the rural homes of the Chinese; in front, the mountain fastnesses of the savages. The internecine strife, which continues to this day between the inhabitants of the plain and the mountain, has produced a wilderness some ten miles in breadth at the foot of the mountain range. Within this

neutral district, however, are a few villages where the savages and the Chinese meet to exchange commodities. At Hoansia, where we had passed the night, we had been urged to proceed no further, as a party of marauding savages had been surrounded on the previous day, and two of their number had been captured and beheaded. Such an incident was, however, of too common an occurrence to be likely to make any change in the friendliness with which Europeans were regarded, and we thought ourselves justified in not heeding the advice, and pursued our way to a neutral village named Kalipo, the Christian headman of Hoansia accompanying us.

"At Kalipo the wife of the headman was of savage birth, and sister of the chief whose home in the mountains it was our object to reach. We experienced considerable delay before we could prevail upon her to act as our guide; indeed, she refused to venture upon doing so unless she could find two other women to go with us. There were several savages in the village, who for a bit of red cloth would have taken us anywhere; but we were

given to understand that we could only penetrate with safety provided we were under female escort. Our next difficulty was to prevail upon our Chinese baggage-carriers to accompany us. Their terror at the idea of entering the dreaded territory was such that bribes and threats appeared at first to be useless to shake their determination to abandon us. In the end the greater part of our things were left behind, and the rest carried by the more valiant of the crew, to whom we assured protection as far as we were able.

"The wife of the headman led the train. She walked with a manlike stride, and carried a long gun upon her shoulder; the rest of the party consisted of our four selves; the Christian Chinese from Hoansia, who was related to the chief we proposed to visit; two savage women; one man, and five or six Chinese coolies carrying our presents of red cloth and beads, our food, and two buckets of samshu and water, a spirit distilled from rice and much appreciated in the mountains. At about three in the afternoon we arrived at the foot of the hills, and were requested to halt. We were

on the boundary, and it was necessary that our guide should give and receive the password before we could go further; I say password, but the signal given on such occasions is, in fact, the cry of a particular bird, which is changed from day to day.

"In about ten minutes our guide returned and beckoned us to proceed. Bending down we passed through the brushwood along a well-concealed path, and emerged upon a grassy knoll. Here we again waited, and our carriers undid their loads. The savage women gave prolonged melodious cries, which echoed into the recesses of the mountains, and answers came back, borne, apparently, from great distances on the air. Presently, far off, we could descry moving figures darting swiftly down the mountain-side; and while scanning the distance for these signs of life, which were rapidly multiplying, the brushwood parted suddenly at our feet, and a savage warrior, emerging from the verge of the ground on which we stood, appeared before us as though he had been shot through a trap-door. His aspect and

the suddenness of his appearance were alike startling. In his hand he carried a spear of great length; round his waist was a kilt falling to his knees. His body was bare and handsomely tattooed; on his head was a tight-fitting leather skull-cap of classical shape, surmounted by a crown of animals' teeth; round his neck he wore a necklace of beads, and at his side a short Roman sword. I had seen the savages of North America and the savages of the Gran Chaco, but I had never seen so comely a savage as this. His features were regular, his eyes brilliant; his limbs, though he was short in stature, were beautifully proportioned, and exhibited strength in every curve; and though I remarked afterwards that he was one of the smartest specimens of his race, the qualities which were specially developed in him were more or less notable in all the savages of the district we visited.

"Some women now appeared upon the ground, looking at us with distrust at first, but coming forward on distinguishing our guides. They were dressed in long garments of cotton girdled at the

waist, and on their heads were thick crowns of green leaves, forming an admirable protection from the sun. The figures we had observed moving down the distant rocks began to come upon the scene of action, and warrior after warrior, in his quaint and brilliant dress, darting with incredible rapidity over the ground, approached our halting-place. The beauty of the view, luxuriant with tropical vegetation, and the fantastic garb of our new acquaintances, removed my thoughts from the reality to the domains of the opera. I might have been looking at a brilliant ballet at Covent Garden, devised to enchain the eye and enchant the imagination. Nor was the sterner dramatic element wanting, for on looking round I observed that our Chinese attendants were white with fear. They knew that the fact of their being under our protection alone saved them from immediate death ; but though this was doubtless true, there were no signs of bloodthirstiness on the part of the savages. On the contrary, they undertook to carry our traps, and, with the exception of three, the Chinese were dismissed to return to the village. They gladly

availed themselves of the permission to go, and fled down the hillside.

"When we were about to move forward a savage appeared, whose rank we concluded to be greater than, or equal to that of the warrior who had first stood by our side, for he stopped the advance, and began a lively dispute with him. We learnt afterwards that he claimed the right to escort us up the mountain, and the dispute waxed so hot that at one moment we thought it must certainly lead to bloodshed. The two men shivered with rage, their eyes shot fire, and even their muscles were swollen with passion. Among civilised nations, however much a man may lose his temper, and though, as is frequently the case in southern countries, he may go to the length of murder in uncontrollable fits of rage, his limbs are so far under control that the mind continues to be visibly master of them. In the case of these savages it appeared as though all trace of will had vanished, and had left their bodies a prey to passion, which contorted them as heat will make metal writhe and sparkle in a furnace.

The conclusion of the quarrel was commonplace—two women rushed between the disputants and, throwing their arms round their necks, persuaded them to peace.

"The path up the mountains was extremely steep, and of such a nature that a stranger without a guide would be unable to follow it. He would think it had come to an end, when, by diving under bamboos or pursuing a water-course, or crossing an unbeaten plot of grass, he would regain it where it could least be expected. In places it wound round precipitous rocks on bamboo bridges about two feet wide. In the case of a hostile advance these bridges could be destroyed in five minutes by cutting away their slender supports.

"During the ascent our Chinamen showed signs of fatigue, and the savage women shouldered their burdens for them and walked upwards with a lithe step. When we halted—which we did rather frequently, for want of breath—a rush was made at the buckets of spirits, and, foreseeing that some of our friends were drinking too much, we found it

necessary to check them. The lower savages submitted to our control, but we made a mistake in treating our first warrior like the rest. On coming forward to drink the lid of the bucket was shut down upon his hand. He started back with a sharp cry and drew his sword. I had with me a breech-loading rifle, which was carried by the Christian Chinese. Quick as lightning he placed it in the hands of the Englishman whose interference had roused the savage, but he was fortunately sufficiently acquainted with the virtue of the foreign weapon to refrain from using his steel. Again the women restored harmony. We were informed that he was of high rank, and capable of judging how much spirit he was able to carry; so we begged him to come and drink as much as he liked, and made a fresh start. Towards five o'clock a thunderstorm drenched us to the skin, and refreshed us after the stifling heat of the rest of the day. By the time we had ascended about 2,500 feet the shades of evening began to fall; but we had reached the highest point on our journey, and the rest of our way was slightly downhill. At one point, where

the path was only about two feet broad, with a clean precipice on the right and jagged rocks on the left, three men with long spears came bounding down behind us. As there was only room for one man abreast I expected them to relax their pace as they approached. Instead of doing so they sprang upon the rocks as nimbly as chamois, passed us, and disappeared in the gloom beyond. When within a mile of our destination we were halted, and asked to fire a gun as a signal of our approach. I fired my rifle three times, and hearing it answered from a distance we were told we could go on. It was now quite dark, and we were unable to keep our eye upon the carriers, who, I regret to say, profited by the opportunity to steal a good part of our provisions, three pewter mugs, and other small articles. This act was a trait of civilisation for which we were unprepared, and I hesitate to admit their title to the appellation of savages, as such a proceeding goes far to invalidate it. They live almost entirely by hunting, they have no money, and have no conception of the value of precious metals; their language is unwritten. Cannibalism

is imputed to them, but I do not know that it is substantiated.

"Towards eight o'clock we reached our destination—a village situate some 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. The scene of our arrival was illuminated by flaming millet stalks, held by savages. An old man came forward and shook each of us by the hand. Immediately afterwards a youth put his arm round my waist and led me along the road, which was paved with rude flagstones in the most inconvenient manner, as about every ten paces a flagstone was placed upright, obliging one to step over it. We were soon again in darkness, and I felt really grateful to my friendly guide, who seemed to be taking so much care of me, till I found that with the hand which was not round my waist he had succeeded in extricating my revolver from my belt. I endeavoured to regain possession of it, and, before I knew where I was, I found myself engaged in a struggle, which would probably have ended in my discomfiture, as I quickly recognised the superior strength and agility of my friend, when a light was shed upon the scene from a

neighbouring doorway, on which he suddenly disappeared, leaving the revolver in my hands.

"A few steps further brought us to the house of the chief, who was a ruler over ten tribes. He was away on a hunting expedition, and we were received by his wife. The house in which they lived was similar to all the others in the village. It was entered by a door only three feet high. Passing through it, the visitor had to continue his bending posture along a passage about five feet in length, issuing into a room ten feet high at the upper end, which was against the rock, and five feet high at the opposite end, which looked on to the road. It was, in fact, a penthouse consisting of one room, used for living, eating, and sleeping. The end towards the road was excavated, so that a person could stand upright in it, although the roof was but five feet from the level of the road. This portion of the room had mats upon the floor, and a wooden settee ran round it against the wall, whereon was seated the wife of the chief. She was a handsome young woman, with regular features and fine eyes, but her good looks were marred by

an incipient goitre. Our Chinese Christian entered the room first, and advancing to the divan on which the lady was seated with her legs tucked up under her, he raised her hand to his lips and reverently kissed it. She bowed to us as we advanced in succession with all the dignity of a western princess. On her head was a massive wreath of brilliant yellow flowers, and we learned afterwards that married women had the privilege of wearing flowers in their hair, while those who were not married might only wear leaves. Her dress was of green cloth with a red and yellow border, and round her neck she wore necklaces of beads. The room was soon filled with a crowd of natives, whose curiosity about us it was difficult to appease. They were friendly, but inconvenient, and it was impossible to escape from them. Our only compensation was that we were equally curious about them, and their appearance was most picturesque. Some wore a species of head-dress which, looked at from the front, resembled a cocked hat with a fringe of many-coloured feathers, others wreaths of small rosy apples, others chaplets of wild boars' tusks.

"The atmosphere of the room became oppressive, and, bending down, I dived through the passage to the fresh air, only to be again surrounded by savages whose rank did not admit of their coming inside. A man of degree, however, presently approached, and to my grateful senses appeared to me to propose that I should go somewhere with him where I should find water. I eagerly consented, and, mounting the hillside, followed him to his house. It was like the one we had left, with the great advantage that no one but my guide's wife was there. The side of the room was ornamented with row upon row of jaw bones symmetrically arranged, the largest being at the top left-hand corner. The savage produced a very large circular iron dish, and then brought from the corner of the room a bamboo about six feet long containing water. He raised this over his shoulder, and poured water from it into the dish, which he placed on the fire. When it was warm he set it down in the corner of the room, and motioned to me, to make use of it. He then showed me uncooked food, making signs that afterwards I was to eat.

It consisted of the entrails of wild boar, and, though hungry, I did not feel that I could manage it; so, after making myself comfortable, I returned to the chief's house.

"The eagerness of the savages to see us and to make acquaintance was so great that our evening was passed in discomfort. Our Chinese servants cooked some meat, which we ate outside the house, reclining on a bamboo platform; but one of our party went to the house I had just left and ate supper with the natives. The meat was cooked in the iron dish I have mentioned before. The company squatted on the floor round it, and the women helped the stranger by putting the food into his hands. No chopsticks were used; they all ate with their fingers. Later in the evening we had singing and dancing, and there was undoubtedly far more melody in the songs than is perceptible to the foreign ear in Chinese music. There were no musical instruments, and the dancing consisted in a dozen men and women going slowly round in a ring, with hands joined, moving the left foot to the left and bringing

the right foot up to it to the time of a measured chant. Having completed the circle once, the measure changed from slow to quick, and the action of the dancers grew more lively, though it never became extravagant. On the circle being again complete they reverted to the slow time. Towards three in the morning I became anxious to learn whether this dreary gaiety was going to come to an end. The interior of the chief's house was full of people, and at last, overcome by fatigue, I lay down and slept upon the flagstones of the court. Some two hours later an old woman woke me, and made signs that I must come inside. The revellers had disappeared, and on entering the room I saw about fifty people lying side by side. I would fain have returned to the open air, but the old woman made signs to me that to do so was unwholesome, and so, lying down on the mat between the wife of the chief and an armed warrior, I slept peacefully till dawn.

"In the morning when we announced our intention to return to the plain difficulties were put in our way, and we were told that we could not be

permitted to leave until the arrival of the chief. A number of lances were stacked against the wall of the house, and the natives destined to do the service of outposts came one after another, received their orders, took a lance, and darted away.

"The distribution of the cloth and beads, which we had brought with us as presents, occupied about two hours, and produced interminable disputes. On finding that we were almost denuded of all we had brought with us we determined to make our retreat, for the return of the chief and his hunting party would have been embarrassing if we had no presents. It was also not at all unlikely that the marauders whose heads had been cut off two days before in the plain had belonged to this party, and that the survivors might be inclined to reprisals. On the wife of the chief being informed that we positively intended starting, whether she sent an escort with us or not, no further opposition was made; she attired herself in a gala costume of green cloth, did up her hair with fresh flowers, and smeared her face with oil. Then seating

herself on the divan she extended her hand for us to kiss as we bade her farewell. I fired three shots from my rifle, which I was told was a civility, and we started down the mountain. On reaching the outskirts of the village we were requested to stop, and presently we saw the wife of the chief being carried down the path towards us on the back of a stalwart warrior. We learnt that it was against etiquette for her to put her foot to the ground outside her own precincts, because of a theory that wherever her foot rested the soil became hers, and as she wished to see us safely on our road she had desired to be carried to the limits of the settlement. The warrior deposited her upon a stone bench, and we again bade her a formal farewell. An escort of picked men accompanied us on our descent, which was rapidly accomplished. On nearing the plain we divided the last remnant of red cloth among them, and once more wrangling began as to the share to which each was entitled. We should have been glad to leave our wild acquaintance with mutual expressions of goodwill; but as it was we had

to part at a moment when their savage nature was making itself unpleasantly conspicuous, and their countenances were distorted with the expression of envy, hatred, and rage. An hour's walk in the plain brought us to Kalipo, and on the following day we returned to Takou."

CHAPTER IX

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR

WHIFFLES had been as good as his word.

He had given me ten minutes' run without interruption. I felt encouraged, and proposed on the same conditions to tell him about a mission with which I was entrusted during the Franco-German War.

"I was one of the second secretaries of the Embassy at Paris at the time. The disasters to French arms had set in, and had culminated at Sedan. Her Majesty's Government, always on the alert to seize any opening which might present itself in furtherance of peace, thought that the moment might possibly have come for negotiation. A despatch was written asking Count Bismarck whether he would be willing to treat with the Government of National Defence. Time was everything, and the question was how to get this

despatch to the Chancellor. It was sent to Paris, with instructions to Lord Lyons to endeavour to forward it. His Excellency sent for me, and on my entering his study he said abruptly, 'Would you like to go and see your old friend Count Bismarck?'

"I naturally replied that I should like nothing better, and it was settled that I should start as soon as he could obtain the necessary passports for me from the French authorities. This was quickly arranged, and late in the afternoon a French officer came to the Embassy to act as my guide. On such an expedition luggage was out of the question, so I slung a pouch on my shoulder containing the despatch, shoved one or two articles into a wallet which I could strap to a saddle, and we started.

"On September 13th, 1870, at four o'clock in the afternoon I stood in the bureau of the Chef de Gare of the Chemin de Fer du Nord at Paris. My companion, a captain of the French staff, was speaking to the Chef de Gare in a low and mysterious tone, and the Chef de Gare weighed his replies and altered them according to the

contents of telegrams arriving every two minutes. 'The bridge on the Chantilly line,' he said as he perused one of these missives, 'was destroyed two hours since. You will have to go by Pontoise; the enemy entered Compiègne this morning. The bridge between Pontoise and Creil is to be blown up at three in the morning. If you start by the eight o'clock train you will pass it five hours before its fragments strew the bed of the river.' My companion's principal inquiry as to the probable presence of French troops in Creil or the neighbourhood was fruitless; no one knew where they were. It was finally determined that we should start for Creil by the 8.35 p.m. train if we chose that line; but the officer in whose charge I was proposed first to go to the Chemin de Fer de l'Est to see whether we could approach the enemy more nearly by rail in that direction. When we reached the 'Gare de Strasbourg' the only signs of life proceeded from squads of men drilling in the courtyard. The trains had all ceased to run, so we proceeded to dine at a café before making a start by the Northern Railway.

"As we whirled down the line an hour later our conversation was of the war—all other topics seemed out of place, and as we swept by factories on fire and burning woods I thought I detected the deep emotion of the officer at the desolation which had fallen on his country. Before such sights the sympathy of a foreigner is cold comfort, and we fell into a sad silence.

"At half-past eleven we reached Creil, and again consulted the Chef de Gare on our movements. He could give little information, and advised us to consult Monsieur le Maire. Guided by a railway porter we traversed the bridge over the Oise, and observed huge stones, not unworthy of Stonehenge, standing upright upon it, and ready to be thrown down to impede the advance of the Prussians. A captain of Pompiers guarded the desolate streets which we traversed to the Maire's abode. It was midnight; our summons sounded on this official's ear as an alarm; cautiously he put his head out of an upper window and demanded our business.

"'It is of the greatest importance,' said my captain, 'and you must admit us at once.'

"'But what is it?' retorted the Maire. 'In these agitated times I can admit no one at night.'

"'Pardon me,' replied the captain, 'our business admits of no delay. I will show you my papers, which will justify my importunity.'

"The Maire continued obstinate till he descried the uniform of the railway official who had guided us to the house; on that he came down and opened the door. Then followed the exhibition of papers, the examination of communal maps, and many apologies for the hesitation shown in admitting us. We decided on driving at once to Senlis, where we should find a sous-préfet and perhaps soldiers.

"Our next step was to obtain a horse and carriage. There was but one place in all Creil where these could be found. Accompanied by the Maire, we proceeded to the house of the owner and effected an entrance in the potent name of our local protector. The dame who received us confessed, with much reluctance, that a horse and carriage stood in the stables. 'But you cannot use them,' she added, 'for there is no one to drive you.'

" 'Where is your husband?' asked the Maire.

" 'He is there,' said the woman, pointing to a recess in the room, across which hung a curtain; 'but he is an arrant coward, and nothing would induce him to drive you to Senlis at night.'

" In vain we remonstrated; she assured us with genuine good faith that he was the veriest poltroon in all Creil, and that the terrors of a night drive would make him die of fright. A sturdy voice from behind the curtain, refusing point-blank to venture ten yards along the road at such times as these, corroborated her assertion, and we were forced to content ourselves with insisting that the horse should be forthwith harnessed and placed at our disposal. At length the creaking of the bed announced that the timorous husband was about to emerge, and presently, instead of a trembling old man, we saw a stalwart peasant come forth. We rallied him on his fears without avail, but he put the horse to, and allowed us to start by ourselves.

" We thought we should be pretty safe from the enemy if we pushed on at once, so we jogged along

the high road under a canopy of clouds with sufficient moonlight to prevent our driving into the ditch by the side of the road. At two in the morning of Wednesday the 14th our carriage wheels resounded on the pavement of Senlis, and again we had to go through the tiresome process of arousing the inmates of a terror-stricken town. Having put up the horse and cart, we directed our steps to the guard-house, where the National Guard met us with an outspoken '*Qui vive?*' '*Des voyageurs,*' was the reply, and we were permitted to advance; more than that, on inquiring the way to the sous-préfet's, four National Guards volunteered to escort us to his house. It was a handsome palace, with a massive gateway flanked by terraced walls, on which the sous-préfet appeared after some time, freshly aroused from sleep. Another parley, ending in a decisive demand for admittance, the huge gate swung slightly ajar, and we found ourselves in a large courtyard.

"'It is the fourth time to-night,' said the unfortunate sous-préfet, 'that I have been called

from my bed; and, what with orders and counter-orders, my ideas are in a state of wild confusion.'

"On proceeding to business, however, he proved most courteous and anxious to assist us. A messenger was to be despatched before us on the road towards Paris, while we took an hour or two for rest. A regiment of Spahis had been in Senlis during the day, and we should learn news of them to guide us in our course.

"Three hours for sleep and then forward, chasing the '*troupe française*,' which had receded from us as though we were the enemy. At Dammartin we heard they had passed two hours before us. The Maire said there was but one carriage in the town, and that was engaged to take a wounded Spahi left behind by his regiment. The place was a picture of desolation, almost totally abandoned by the population, who had fled in terror to the woods, and were dying of starvation. It was the first town I had seen by daylight where the approach of the Prussians cast its shadow before. The shops were all closed, and old men and small children alone peopled the streets.

"Our credentials gained us a share in the carriage ordered for the Spahi, and we started again in the hopes of catching up his regiment. I confess I should have preferred to have been ultimately placed in the hands of any soldiers but Spahis, as I imagined that an escort of these grim Africans would be the most unfavourable one possible for a pacific approach of the Prussian lines. Our Spahi was wounded in the jaw, and was likewise drunk, and nothing but the authoritative tone of the officer with me reduced him to order and ultimately sleep.

"We now came into a region of burning ricks; the Franc-tireurs had set fire to all in the neighbourhood, and the few peasants left watched the destruction of their property with streaming eyes. As we passed close to the burning cones we could see the furnace of flame seething and coiling in the interstices, and the hot blast frightened the horse and made him rush wildly along the narrow road. Soon we came to the direct route between Paris and Metz, and found it encumbered to hinder the advance of the Germans. The paving stones

were torn from their places, the trees on either side were felled, but as yet there was everywhere a space left to admit of the passage of a carriage. Presently we came to a trench where men were busily at work ; they urged us forward at full speed, saying they were on the point of blowing up the road. No sooner had we passed this danger than another batch of men shouted to us to stop for dear life, and looking up we perceived a tree, cut through at the base, swaying in the air ere it fell ; a crack of the whip launched the carriage out of its reach, and we heard it fall with a thud in our rear. Either side of the road to Paris was lined with houses and pretty suburban villas, the pride of French bourgeoisie, all desolate. Squads of Franc-tireurs met us at frequent intervals, and I fancy our wounded Spahi served as a passport and saved us from interference.

“ At length, at four in the afternoon, to our great satisfaction, when almost under the forts of Paris, the Spahi gave a wild yell of delight on descrying the red cloaks and the horses of his regiment far away up the road. He chuckled, he laughed, and

he cried, all because he saw a prospect of recovering his horse. A few minutes more, and we found ourselves in the midst of two regiments of cavalry—Spahis and Chasseurs. My companion decided, somewhat to my relief, to commit me to the care of the Chasseurs, and in a short time an escort of thirty men, including a lieutenant and a trumpeter, was prepared as my *parlementaire*. I was placed under its protection, and bade a grateful farewell to the staff officer who had accompanied me from Paris.

“The sky was lowering, and shortly the rain began to fall. Our intention was to make for Claves, which we imagined to be already occupied by the enemy. As we trotted along, the officer, touching his cap, asked me my name, with a civil excuse that he had not heard it when we were introduced. He was a good-looking, matter-of-fact youth, who had been under the burning sun in Algeria with his regiment at the beginning of September, and now, in the third quarter of the moon, found himself face to face with the northern invaders in the chill autumn air. Not long after

we started, some panic-stricken peasants warned us that the road in front of us was about to be blown up, and a soldier was despatched at full gallop to save our communications. We cross-questioned Franc-tireurs and peasants as to the movements of the Prussians, and at length learnt, for certain, that a few of their cavalry had entered Clayes during the day, and had soon afterwards quitted it. The officer turned to me and asked, with a half-inquisitive smile, whether 'I was prepared to sleep under the *belle étoile*.' It was already getting late, and it would not do to enter Clayes and be surprised in the night. He and his men would be taken prisoners, and I should enter the Prussian lines shorn of the dignity due to my mission. I had had nothing to eat since the early morning, and while expressing my willingness to sleep—not, alas! under the *belle étoile*, but in the rain—I could not resist asking a question as to whether they had any provisions with them. He replied in the negative, and we directed our horses off the road in search of comparative shelter beneath the trees.

"Before we had had time to settle on a spot for

our bivouac an officer of Franc-tireurs appeared, who, on learning that the escort belonged to the premiers Chasseurs, greeted them heartily as his old regiment and proposed that we should share pot-luck with him. We cordially accepted, and, retracing our steps, found ourselves in a camp of about a hundred Franc-tireurs. Night had fallen. The officers and men were gathered together in a clump of ruined outhouses. The horses of the escort were soon picketed in an adjoining field, and the captain of Franc-tireurs invited me to follow him. A slight delay, caused by my horse refusing to cross a little ditch, separated us, and before I could rejoin him a menacing soldier barred my way. He refused to allow me to pass, and derided my assurance that I had come with an escort and was invited by his captain to dinner. I was so close to both my protectors that I attempted to force my way, but was brought up short by the muzzle of the soldier's gun and the click of the cock, so I devoted my energies to inducing my horse to stand still till someone arrived to deliver me. A Franc-tireur who had overheard the invitation endeavoured

to get me through, but the sentry, steadfast to his duty, said he would shoot me if I advanced. Presently the captain of the escort, having noticed my absence, returned, and after a short explanation I was allowed to pass.

"The barn was full of animation ; at a large fire in the centre cooking was going on. The only chair in the place was given to me, and I relished the 'pot-au-feu' with hearty goodwill. An officer next to me entertained me with a story of how he had gone out in the dusk of the morning, and, hearing that there were 'hurlans' at a neighbouring farmhouse, had lain in ambush and shot three individuals one after the other as they emerged, whom on approaching he discovered to be not 'hurlans,' but peasants. The captain told me he held control over his men by humouring their inclinations, and their inclinations appeared to me to be not such as would conduce to the general welfare of society. Inquiries were naturally made as to who I was, and when my mission became known I was treated with a consideration from which I would fain have been exempt. A deserted stable was allotted me

to sleep in, and eight Franc-tireurs were told off to sleep by me and guard me. I was placed in the centre, and they lay in a circle round me. In fact, I was more a prisoner than a guest. Extra pickets were placed in the neighbourhood, and I was informed that on the slightest alarm I should be hurried off to a place of safety. The captain of the escort now left me, as he had to pass the night with his men at a short distance, and I lay down on the ground with some uneasiness at being alone with my lawless protectors, which was not diminished by overhearing loud complaints at the additional duties imposed upon them by having to watch over 'un agent diplomatique.' Silence was ordered, but it was only preserved on the occasional appearance of an officer, who repeated the injunction in a stentorian voice. Just as I had dropped off for my first sleep I was aroused by soldiers bringing me a mattress, so that I might have slept could I have disregarded what passed around me. Every hour some of the men who were in the stable with me were ordered to take their turn at mounting guard, and they never consented without a violent

altercation with the sergeant who came to call them. Two Poles were specially irritable on being roused, and threatened to desert on the first opportunity if they were forced to go; but the dispute always ended in the superior carrying his point. I could not help feeling that there was a grim humour in my sleep being rendered impossible by the precautions taken to ensure my rest.

"At four o'clock on Thursday the 15th we were all stirring, and having sought the captain of the Franc-tireurs to express to him my hearty thanks for the hospitality and shelter he had afforded me, I regained my escort, and in the grey light of the early dawn we once more started on our journey.

"Clayes, like the villages in the neighbourhood, was silent and abandoned. An old man sitting on a doorstep informed us that twenty men of the Prussian cavalry had been there on the previous day and retired. Shortly afterwards we crossed a massive old stone bridge, which had resisted all efforts to blow it up. The sun had risen, and was beginning to dissipate the shroud of mist which had rendered it dangerous to advance other-

wise than at a foot-pace ; we scanned the plains right and left of us with eager eyes, and when the road led to the horizon in front we halted and sounded the trumpet. Taking this precaution, we had advanced some five kilometres, when we descried about a thousand yards off a single figure close to a haystack, on a road at right angles to the one on which we were. We halted, and immediately a second figure appeared ; and now the sunlight glistening on their guns assured us that they were soldiers. We trumpeted, and more men appeared from behind other haystacks farther down the road ; and presently numbers began to emerge from the gateway of a farm about half a mile down the byroad on the right. Then, leaving our escort on the high road, the lieutenant, the trooper with the white handkerchief, the trumpeter, and I branched off and made at a foot-pace across the field in the direction of the farm. The handkerchief tied to the end of a long tapering branch, which had the day before attracted the chaff of some soldiers of the line, who inquired if we were going on a fishing excursion, now guaranteed us

against Prussian bullets ; and I approached half a dozen men, with their guns to their hips ready to fire, with the assurance that our white flag protected us from danger. As soon as we were within hail they bade us halt, and asked what our business was, and I replied in my best German. On that one of the soldiers fetched a sergeant, and the sergeant fetched an officer, and the officer requested the lieutenant of the Chasseurs to go with him, and to leave the rest of the escort with orders not to move from their position. Our path lay by the farm, which was crammed with riflemen ; they swarmed out of the gates and out of the doors like bees out of a hive, forming a vivid contrast to the deserted habitations we had passed. Ten minutes before, the land had seemed bereft of human life ; here, on a sudden, all was animation.

“The village of Villenoy, to which we bent our steps, lies in a hollow. From every window peeped a Prussian head, from every door Prussians came out to look at us as we passed. The major of the regiment had lodged himself at a pretty old-fashioned country house, evidently the manor

house, quaint, with well-kept French gardens, looking beautiful in a bright September sun. After a short pause the major came out, and having informed himself of the object of my journey asked me to dismount, and offered the hospitality of his quarters to me and to the French officer who accompanied me. The latter remained while a safe-conduct was made out to ensure his return in case he met with Prussian troops on his way back, and the little that passed between him and his enemies was marked by appropriate courtesy on either side. His mission, which was to place me in the hands of a German officer, was accomplished, and having received my best thanks for his care and attention he rejoined the **escort.**

"The ride through the fresh morning air had made me readily accept breakfast from my new protectors, while orders were sent to prepare a horse and a guard to accompany me to Meaux. The German officers talked much of the campaign, and while acknowledging that there were probably yet hard moments in store for them, expressed

explicit confidence in 'Bismarck and Moltke' pulling them through. I learnt with great satisfaction that the King and the Chancellor were to arrive at Meaux in the afternoon. Up to that moment I had been in complete ignorance of the whereabouts of the royal headquarters, and very anxious at the prospect of a prolonged absence from Paris. At such a crisis time was invaluable, and if the King had been at Compiègne a collision with troops about the capital might occur before I could regain my post. An officer and two dragoons guided me to the town, and we alighted at the residence of a Prussian general. A Prussian band was playing before the house, and idlers were listening to it. I explained my object, and was conducted to the Mairie, where I received a ticket billeting me upon the Hôtel du Grand Cerf, in the Rue St. Christophe; and there, having all the day before me, I went gratefully to bed and slept for three hours.

"Meaux is a pleasant-looking town with a handsome cathedral and a bishop's palace adjoining. The inhabitants had not fled, and appeared

to receive the invaders with sullen civility. The German officers in my hotel paid for all they took, but it took a long time to settle the accounts owing to the difficulty of turning thalers into francs. The Germans attempted to explain themselves in French, and the French endeavoured to understand; but the difference of language and the difference of money entailed endless confusion. Good behaviour prevailed on both sides and a stranger dropped from the skies might have traversed the town without suspecting that it was a prey to foreign invasion.

"In the course of the afternoon I learnt at a bookseller's that the King was to put up at a house on the Boulevard, and sauntering towards the spot I saw a guard of honour drawn up before a handsome building standing back from the street, and fronted by a garden. His Majesty arrived about half-past five o'clock. He drove up in an open carriage by himself, some half-dozen carriages full of officers following. The guard of honour cheered him as he drove into the gates of his temporary home. I watched eagerly for the well-known face

of Count Bismarck, and when all the carriages accompanying the King had passed I half feared, not seeing him, that after all the Chief Minister might have separated from his Sovereign. A minute more and my fears were dispelled; three carriages approached, in the first of which sat the Chancellor of the North German Confederation, alone, like the King. It stopped at a house in a narrow street in the town, and when he had alighted I addressed myself to an officer who had followed in the second carriage, and, stating my business, requested him to ascertain when I might have the honour of being received by Count Bismarck. Within two minutes I was shown in to His Excellency, and delivered to him the despatch with which I was charged.

"I have no hesitation in confessing that as I disburthened myself of this document I relieved my mind of a heavier weight. I had placed it in a courier's bag, I had locked the bag, had slung it on my shoulder, and had kept it by my side when I slept; yet I could never divest myself of a vague apprehension, and of a sense of the

appalling absurdity of finding myself at the Prussian headquarters, after all the ceremony of the journey, without the despatch.

"Count Bismarck's treatment of me, which was kind in every way, was no doubt due to old Frankfort associations, when my father and he were colleagues. I refused his offer of a bed, as my things were already at the hotel, where I thought I should be more at my ease.

"On taking leave of him at about half-past ten in the evening, he said, 'I would lend you my horse, but flags of truce have been fired on. I hope you will get through safely, but I cannot risk my horse being shot.' And so we parted.

"On the morning of Friday the 16th I paced up and down the street, impatiently waiting for the escort to take me back, and at last began to fear that its delay might prevent me from reaching Paris the same evening. As I was both very anxious to deliver the return despatch with which I was charged as quickly as possible, and indisposed to pass a second night with Franc-tireurs, I hailed the appearance, at half-past nine, of an

officer, a dragoon trumpeter, an Uhlan, and a led horse with delight. My wallet was speedily strapped to the saddle, and with a kindly farewell to my friendly landlady I started on my homeward journey.

"At the point where the day before I had entered the Prussian lines a detachment of Prussian dragoons crossed our path, which lay along the high road. The officer in command saluted the officer with me, and excused himself from any parley, saying he was in a hurry. On nearing Clayes the Uhlan approached a fence, and having pulled a stake out of it, tied thereto a white handkerchief. As we clattered through the deserted streets two old men came out to look at us. I presume it was the first appearance of the enemy, for I heard one of them exclaim, 'Eh bien! ce sont des hommes comme nous.' Indeed, the stories of the Prussians prevalent among the ignorant peasantry would lead them to the belief that the invaders were an army of mythical monsters.

"Soon after we had passed the town we heard

the sound of horses' hoofs behind us, and, looking back, saw the detachment of Prussian cavalry coming quickly along the road in our rear. I expressed my anxiety to the officer with me, who, however, needed no word from me to see that their advance would compromise our pacific character, and, wheeling his horse round, he rode back and gave the necessary orders for them to stop. The woods now lined the road on either side; and, knowing that the neighbourhood was full of Franc-tireurs, to many of whom a flag of truce was an unknown mystery, and whose greatest glory was a pot-shot at an Uhlan, I was glad at about one o'clock to get to a village and an unmistakable barricade with muskets gleaming behind it.

"We approached with due caution, and about as much trumpeting as on the previous day. The expression of the Franc-tireurs who came forward to receive us was much more grim than that of the Prussian outposts, and we had to wait some time before an officer of sufficient rank was found to authorise my reception. Meanwhile, one of the soldiers, probably an Alsatian, had fraternised with

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my Uhlan in his own language, and gave him a bottle of wine to drink. When at length the officer did arrive, he was very curt till he had examined my papers, and then no one could have been more civil. He, however, informed me that I should have to walk the whole distance to Paris (ten miles), as the road was so broken up that even a horse could not pass. I thanked the Prussian officer for his protection, and having obtained for him a safe-conduct to return, proceeded on my way, accompanied by the captain of Franc-tireurs. He offered me breakfast, and we went into his quarters, a little villa by the roadside, the pet nook of some worthy Paris tradesman, turned inside out by the retreating soldiery. My meal consisted of wine and green-gages ; all else had been devoured by the company, unbidden, alas ! by the proprietor. An hour's walk brought us to Bondy, where I was taken to another detachment of Franc-tireurs, and the officer in command furnished me with a guard of ten men and a lieutenant to escort me to Paris.

"Thus protected, I made my final start. Even walking for the first part of the way was no easy

matter. The paving stones had been torn up, the trees on either side felled, and at intervals of half a mile there were deep trenches cut in the road, with mounds of earth surmounted by branches, which we had to climb or circumvent. As we neared Paris we fell in with trains of peasantry arriving with household goods and provisions. The lieutenant sent forward one of his men to hire carriages inside the gates, in order that we might not march in procession through the streets. I suggested that I could find my way in safety when I was once within the walls, but he replied that his orders were to conduct me to the Embassy, and that he could not depart from them.

"On reaching the gate we saw some commotion, and found that our Franc-tireur who had gone before to order the carriages had been arrested, and it took some time to rescue him from the clutch of the over-zealous National Guards. Once in the 'enceinte' I attracted general attention, which at last became so unpleasant that the officer proposed to me to take his arm, that the crowd might see I was not a prisoner. It was no small

relief to get to a hackney-coach stand and into a carriage. The mob peered through the windows of the cab, and we drove with difficulty through the crowd. But my troubles had come to an end, and in half an hour we reached home. I saw the arms of my guard piled in the court. My escort of *Franc-tireurs* had arrived first, and was waiting to receive us—probably the first time that the military had ever been within the British Embassy.

“It was five o'clock on the 16th of September, and on looking round and seeing the quiet walls I had known so long, it was well-nigh impossible to believe that eight hours before I had been in the midst of the German host. The garden sward was as green as ever, the flowers as bright, the fountain trickled as quietly; and I said to myself, ‘Is it a nightmare, or have I indeed to-day seen abandoned towns, blown-up bridges, burning ricks, the havoc and desolation of war?’”

CHAPTER X

BISMARCK'S TERMS OF PEACE

"**A**ND now," said Whiffles, "is there any objection to your telling me what Prince Bismarck said to you, for you have left Hamlet somewhat out of your story?"

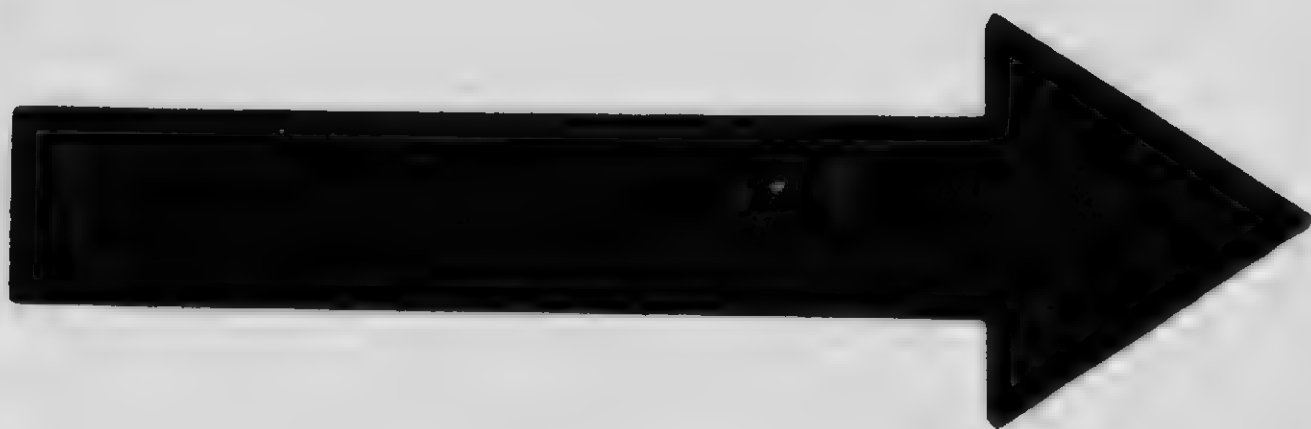
"Prince Bismarck was the most agreeable man in conversation that it has ever been my good fortune to know. He had the charm of speaking on apparent terms of equality with whomever he might be addressing, provided the conversation was with one towards whom he was not ill-disposed. Dr. Schweningen has said that what always struck him most about the Prince was his simplicity. It is easy for those who knew the Prince to understand what Dr. Schweningen means, but I should be inclined to substitute the word 'lucidity' for 'simplicity.' In his talk he had the power of reducing the most complex questions to their

simplest form. He would explain his views with a precision which excluded all doubt as to the meaning which he intended to convey. He would often hesitate until he could find the exact word to express what was in his mind. He seemed to have a hatred for ambiguity. He always spoke to me in English, in which he was fluent, but if he had a doubt about his being clear in regard to any particular word he would ask me to help him. He would give the word in German or in French until I could give him its exact counterpart in English.

"He had been the Prussian Representative at the Diet of the Germanic Confederation at Frankfort at the time that my father was British Minister to the Diet, and a warm personal friendship had sprung up between them based on the similarity of their tastes in private life. They were both, when politics did not occupy them, devoted to the pursuits of country gentlemen: riding, shooting, fishing, all outdoor pastimes. There was between them a community of genial instincts in regard to what I may call the holiday part of their existence,

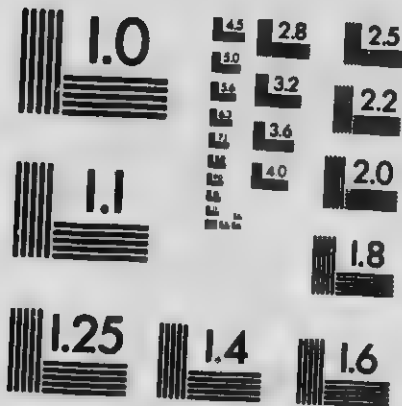
and they never allowed politics, with regard to which circumstances did not permit of their running in the same groove, to interfere with their friendship or their sport. Prince Bismarck also found pleasure in my mother's society. Her vivacity and quickness of intellect gave him the exchange which makes conversation pleasant, and the first words he said to me when he saw me at Meaux were, 'How like you are to your mother.' Later on he reverted to the Frankfort days, and spoke with great regard of my parents; old memories came back to him, and he illustrated the attitude of Germany towards France at that moment by an anecdote about myself, which had left no mark on my own memory.

"'Although you were but a child,' he said, 'you had your fancies about ladies, and I remember an occasion on which your mother was going to give a ball, and you were very anxious that a certain lady should be asked to it. Unfortunately her position did not entitle her in your mother's view to an invitation and she was deaf to your little prayer, on which you threw yourself down on the floor and



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said that you would not get up until it was granted. In the same way we have thrown ourselves down on the soil of France, and shall not rise until our demands are acceded to.'

"With regard to the despatch which I had brought for him he was very discouraging. He said that the reply he intended to make was that before entering on negotiations he must know what guarantees the Government of National Defence could give that they had power to treat. Of course at that time three weeks had not elapsed since it had usurped the reins of Government, and had declared the Empire to be at an end. Its stability was still an open question.

"In the course of the evening the despatch which he had drafted in answer to Lord Granville was brought to him to sign, and I did not disguise my sorrow at having to take back so meagre a reply. A few minutes later the despatch was returned from the Chancery sealed. It was eleven o'clock. The Prince rose and placed it in my hands. 'And now,' he said, 'to you as a friend I will say one word more. If a member of the

Government of National Defence chooses to come and see me I shall be happy to receive him.' I felt a deep sense of relief. 'I may give that message?' I said eagerly. 'Yes,' he replied; 'the despatch you will carry conveys my official reply to Lord Granville's inquiry, but you may repeat what I have said to you. If anyone comes he need have no anxiety as to being properly received.' And so it came about that I returned to Paris with a better answer in my head than in my pocket.

"On quitting the Chancellor I returned to my hotel, and at once committed to paper as much of what he had said to me as I could recollect. Here are his words as my memory served to reproduce them:—

"The answer I have made to the despatch is that we want to know what guarantee exists that the present Government can make good a peace it might conclude. M. Favre's answer is all words. Does Bazaine recognise the present Government? Does the fleet do so? An armistice we refuse absolutely, it could only act in favour of the French. The

French Government cannot suppose that it is of any use to urge that the Empire made the war and not the French people. There was not a Deputy except those now in office who spoke against it; and this Government, now it has obtained power, is speaking most deceitfully in encouraging the people to believe that they can continue the war, and putting in their heads that the mediation of neutrals will rescue them from the position in which defeat has placed them. It is the twenty-seventh war within two centuries made by the French against Germany, and a peace concluded now, leaving France in its former territorial conditions, would simply be an armistice lasting till they had recruited their forces and obtained allies. I stood alone in Prussia in preventing war on the Luxemburg question, because I thought that the resentments existing then might dull with time and disappear, as the feelings engendered by Waterloo disappeared; but I was mistaken, and it is certain that as long as France is enabled by the possession of Strasburg and Metz to attack Germany, so long shall we be exposed to a succession of wars. I

have spoken in this way to you merely as an old friend.

“I wish it to be known that we have not the slightest desire to influence the way in which France decides to be ruled. We have as yet continued to regard the Emperor as sovereign of France in the provinces which are in our possession; but it is an obvious act of courtesy, and not intended to indicate a policy. We are indifferent as to whether France be a republic or an Orleanist Monarchy, or under Henri cinq.

“With regard to terms of peace, we do not ask for Alsace or Lorraine; France may keep them under conditions which would render them useless as a lever in making war against us, but we must insist on Strasburg and Metz. Strasburg will shortly be ours. We hear that at Metz they are already eating their horses, and we believe that it will soon fall. The design on Paris is to cut all its communications, which we shall be able to do with 70,000 cavalry. Fifteen divisions of cavalry will be sufficient to prevent its receiving supplies, and may succeed in inducing it to surrender; but if

it is necessary to burn it we shall not shrink from doing so. 250,000 men will be relieved by the fall of Metz, and they will live on the country. We do not ourselves propose to go further than Meaux ("I presume that this referred to the King and himself").

"Every successive document published by the Provisional Government has decreased the chances of peace. They should have come forward frankly and said, "The fortunes of war are against us, and we should endeavour to make peace on as easy terms as we can obtain." Instead of that, while the eastern provinces are actually in our possession, they say they will not surrender an inch of territory, nor a stone of their fortresses, and they propose a money compensation for the war.

"It is impossible not to consider what would have been their attitude towards us had the result of the campaign been reversed. Would they have hesitated for a moment to exact the complete disintegration of Germany? And they ask us to accept money, of which we are not in want, and to leave France just as it was when the war began.

"‘I pray of you to say, when you go back, that we are neither children nor fools.’

"On arriving in Paris I found Lord Lyons in the garden of the Embassy, and as we walked to and fro together on the lawn I made my report.

"About noon on the following day I was told that His Excellency wished to see me. I stepped across from the Chancery and was shown into the yellow drawing-room, where I found him with M. Jules Favre. I was asked to sit down, and then Lord Lyons said to me, ‘Will you repeat to Monsieur Jules Favre the exact words which Count Bismarck said to you on parting?’ I did so. Nothing further passed as far as I was concerned. Monsieur Favre listened attentively, but said nothing. Lord Lyons gave me a kindly nod of dismissal and I retired; but the message which I thus conveyed determined M. Jules Favre to go and see Count Bismarck. The result was the celebrated interview at Ferrières, when peace could have been made on comparatively easy terms."

"What makes you think so?" said Whiffles.

"Count Bismarck told me that his demand would be Strasburg and a zone round it."

"Did you tell M. Jules Favre?"

"Certainly not; our object was to get a chance of peace by means of direct negotiations between the two Governments. Had I said a word about the terms which Count Bismarck would propose, they would have been submitted to the French Cabinet, and M. Favre would not have been allowed to go. As it was, he burst into tears when Count Bismarck proposed a cession of territory, and the negotiations came to an end. It must be remembered that at that time Strasburg had not fallen, and Bazaine's army was intact.

CHAPTER XI

AT TOURS

"ON the evening of the same day we quitted Paris for Tours by the last passenger train which left the city before its investment by the Germans. The train was crammed with members of the Government and of the Diplomatic Corps.

"We arrived at Tours at about eight in the morning, and found ourselves in a comical predicament. Two things had been foreseen for some time, one that the Government of National Defence would be obliged to take refuge in some central city in the provinces, and the other that the city most likely to be chosen was Tours. So thither had fled all those who desired, when the appointed hour should come, to be where the Government gathered together. The result was that every hotel and every lodging-house was full. In vain we went from one to another. There was nothing but hubbub

and bustle. It was difficult to get even a hearing of our wants. We were accompanied by a porter propelling a handcart piled with luggage, and trudged drearily from pillar to post. At length the weary porter said he could go no further, and we had to bivouac in the middle of the street. We sat upon the luggage, and looked at each other. No ambassador had ever been in so neglected a plight. Now it so happened that some three weeks before a gentleman of Tours had offered his château in the neighbourhood to Lord Lyons, and His Excellency had sent him a civil refusal—firstly, because he thought it not prudent to strengthen the impression that the time for abandoning Paris was imminent; and, secondly, from an innate dislike to receiving favours. But now in our need we remembered this. We dragged a despatch box from beneath the pile of portmanteaus, and found the letter making the offer of the Château de Rigny.

“Armed with the address, Mr. Sheffield, Lord Lyons’ private secretary, went in search of the writer, and after waiting for another half-hour in our quaint position in the middle of the street

our anxieties were relieved. Mr. Sheffield returned with the proprietor of the château, who expressed his delight at hearing that the Ambassador would make it his abode. Our delight at hearing that it was still at our disposal was, if anything, greater. It lay across the Loire on a picturesque eminence about a mile and a half from the town. It had once been a convent, and was surrounded with pleasant gardens of a bygone fashion—just the place to suit refugees from turmoil and strife.

"Tours is famous as a centre for visiting the castles of the Loire, and in one of our expeditions we had an adventure which illustrated the troublous times through which we were passing and the placid mind and good sense of our Ambassador. On a bright day in early October we started for the Castle of Amboise. The spy mania in France was then at its height, but we certainly did not anticipate that it could have any terrors for a party of our extremely commonplace appearance. Spies do not usually go about in groups of four, and in a comfortable landau.

"The castle is a fortress of considerable extent.

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On arriving at its entrance, we found a small guard with an officer in charge, to whom we revealed our identity and showed our passports. He was very civil, and offered to detail a sergeant to take us round. Lord Lyons thought it would be pleasanter to roam about by ourselves, and as the officer made no objection, but seemed only anxious to consult His Excellency's wishes, we started off alone, and spent a pleasant hour and a half in examining the historic ruins.

"On returning to the gate at which we had entered a truculent sergeant demanded our business. We explained that we had been admitted by the officer in charge only a short time before, but he would have none of it. We gathered that the guard had changed at noon, the officer had disappeared, and had apparently omitted to mention our existence. We were quickly brought to recognise the mistake we had made in refusing his offer to send one of his men with us. The terrible sergeant had the spy mania. He surrounded us with a guard, and marched us through the little town to the military 'poste.' By the time we

got there most of its inhabitants, big and small, had gathered round our procession, and the grim word 'espions' was murmured in the crowd.

"Was ever an ambassador in such a predicament?"

"Visions of street boys bawling through the streets of London awful headings in the evening newspapers rose in our imaginations: 'International outrage!' 'The British Ambassador arrested as a spy!' 'Marched through the town like a felon!' 'Meeting of the Cabinet!' 'Crisis imminent!' We whispered these pleasantries among ourselves when out of the Ambassador's earshot.

"I have never made up my mind as to what is the most advantageous attitude for conscious innocence to assume—whether indignation or resignation is best calculated to arrest suspicion. On the whole I think we took the wisest line that was open under the circumstances. We looked neither crestfallen nor defiant. Our demeanour was absolutely passive. We asked for an officer; there was none. Then what proved to be a happy thought struck us. We asked for 'Monsieur le Maire,' and this seemed to agree with the views

of the sergeant, and here a slight difference of opinion arose between our chief and us. We thought that the messenger to be despatched to the mayor should take Lord Lyons' card. His Excellency was loth to allow this, as he would fain have escaped without his identity being known. The argument, however, that it was more likely to impress the mayor than anything we could say verbally, as it bore the magic words 'l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre,' carried the day, and we were right, for within ten minutes 'Monsieur le Maire' came almost running, and our troubles were quickly at an end. He knew of our arrival in the town through the gossip of our coachman, and was profuse in his apologies for the 'malentendu' that had occurred. His authority proved sufficient to obtain our immediate release, and in a quarter of an hour we were driving back to Tours.

"Lord Lyons was silent for some time, and we followed his example. Probably the same thought was in all our minds. How would he deal with the incident? Should we, on returning, spend

the evening in telegraphing and copying formal demands of apology to the Government of National Defence? We were fully alive to the gravity of the case. How would our chief treat it?

"Presently he spoke and solved our curiosity.

"‘Mind,’ he said, ‘not one word of this must pass your lips. It must never be spoken of again. I give you this as an order.’

"From that day to now the order has been respected, but as the adventure happened twenty-eight years ago, and——"

"You reveal it," said Whiffles sharply.

"Pray, do not pull me up in that brusque manner," I said; "and as to indiscretion," I cried, for I often felt what he meant without his putting his thoughts into words, "there is none. Time has passed its sponge over all the harm the telling of the story could once have done.

"But with regard to secrets in general, I remember Lord Lyons saying that there were very few men who could keep them, and next to no women; and he propounded a duty in regard to a secret which he considered an essential sign of

the discretion of the person to whom it had been confided, and that was withstanding the temptation to boast of having known it previously, when, through altered circumstances, the veil of secrecy became no longer necessary. To this extent I must now plead guilty.

"How excellent a lesson in regard to time not obliterating the duty to keep a secret, is the old story of the cardinal at an evening party, who, when pressed by an admiring circle of ladies to say whether he had ever received startling confessions, replied that the first person who confessed to him after he had taken orders had come to him to ask for absolution for a murder. A gentle shudder ran through the frames of his fair inquirers, which was turned to consternation when ten minutes later an elderly and respected marquis entered the room, and after making his 'salut circulaire' eagerly claimed acquaintance with the cardinal. 'But I see,' he said, 'that your eminence does not remember me. Allow me to recall myself to your memory. It will come back to you when I remind you that I was the first person

who confessed to you after you entered the service of the Church."

"A very old story indeed," said Whiffles.

"Yes," I said; "but it conveys so useful a warning that it deserves to be hung up like a text in a railway station, so let it stand."

"Hang," said Whiffles; "and now go on with your recollections of Tours."

"Nothing worth telling occurred. We passed our time somewhat monotonously, and played dummy whist in the evening, at which Lord Lyons invariably won because he knew the game and we did not, and we so far settled down that we felt extremely annoyed when, in common with all the other diplomatists, we received a message from the Government to say that it was obliged to leave Tours the same evening on account of the approach of the Germans, and that room would be provided in the train for the Diplomatic Corps.

"Lord Lyons had a strong objection to being hustled, and if ever a household was hustled we were on that occasion. Everything had to be packed in a few hours, and when at last all was

ready he said placidly, 'This is my last move. If the Germans come to Bordeaux I shall get on board ship and go home.' These were the only words prompted by irritation which I heard him pronounce during all that troubled period.

"Our experience on arriving at Tours had made us take measures not to be caught in the same trap again, and we had taken steps to reserve the first floor of the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs at Bordeaux some time before. There we were comfortably lodged till we returned to Paris on the signature of the preliminaries of peace."

CHAPTER XII

THE COMMUNE

"I HAVE allowed you to ramble on," said Whiffles, "as fancy takes you, but I should now like to hark back for a moment. You were in Paris at the time of the Battle of Sedan? Think and speak."

"The news of the capitulation reached us in a cyphered telegram on the afternoon of the 3rd of September. Lord Lyons gave us strict injunctions to say nothing about it, as he did not wish the report to be traced in the first instance to the British Embassy. It became gradually known in the course of the evening, and by midnight the pall of the disaster had spread itself over the Boulevards—anxiety, depression, and grief marked every face. The light-hearted step of the pleasure-seekers from the Madeleine to the Opera had given way to the dull tread of people following a funeral,

and the joyful babel of voices was sobered to a muttered requiem. All that night the waters of indignation continued to rise ; in the morning it was a flood. The people streamed in serried masses through the Place de la Concorde over the Seine to the Palais Bourbon, and in a moment the Government and the Empire were swept away. Then the flood ebbed back towards the Tuileries, where the Empress Eugénie, whose nerve never left her, watched it approaching till it hurled itself against her palace. Not a soul of those whose duty it was to protect her was by her side—not a general, not a minister. Prince Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, Count Nigra, the Italian Minister, and Monsieur de Lesseps were with her, and it was only on their earnest entreaty that she consented to fly when the mob had broken into the Tuileries gardens and were making for the palace. It was hurriedly settled that the Empress should make her escape by the Louvre, as there was continuous communication from the Tuileries through the picture-galleries to the Galerie des Rois at the east end, though half a mile of corridor and gallery

had to be passed. Every second was of vital importance, and an intense moment of anxiety came when it was discovered that the door leading from the palace to the museum was locked. All would have been lost had not M. de Lesseps, by a dexterous manoeuvre, diverted the crowd from entering by the windows. The Suez Canal was the origin of his happy stratagem. He ordered the portals of the palace to be thrown wide open. The effect was instantaneous, the mob rushed forwards through the great Porte Cochère, and surged through into the open space beyond, forming the Place du Carrousel. The pressure from behind prevented any halt. The mob streamed through like the waters through a canal when the sluice is opened. In the meantime the key of the door from the Tuileries to the Louvre had been found, and the Empress, accompanied by Madame le Breton, was speeding along the galleries to the eastern entrance. In front of it was a cabstand. With perfect sang-froid she hailed a voiture de place; but as she stepped into it a little street urchin emerging from the gutter looked up at her,

and with open-eyed astonishment exclaimed, 'Tiens c'est l'Impératrice.' Fortunately no one was near, and the little gavroche was 'quitte pour la peur,' or whatever other sentiment the recognition inspired him with. On quitting the Tuileries, Prince Metternich came to Lord Lyons, and told him that it had been arranged that the Empress should go to London that night by the ordinary express *via* Dover and Calais. She would arrive at the Gare du Nord in a cab like any other passengers with Madame le Breton, and she would be glad if one of the secretaries of our Embassy would be on the look-out for her, and accompany her to London.

"Lord Lyons entrusted me with the duty. The project seemed dangerous, but it appeared that they had been able to think of nothing better. The Empress would be in black. I was to take with me passports which were to be made out in the names of Mr. Saunders and Mrs. Wilson. I suggested that I had better have a lot of money with me in case a guard or porter should be too inquisitive. It was the only weapon which could

have a chance of success. In the afternoon I got 5,000 francs in gold and notes. It so happened that it was the evening on which the Queen's Messenger who made the journeys between Paris and London, left, and I was obliged to let him so far into my confidence as to request him to take no notice of me if he saw me on the platform with a couple of ladies. Then I made out the two passports for Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Wilson and waited.

"About six o'clock Lord Lyons again sent for me, and told me that he had just received a message from Prince Metternich to say that my services would not be required, as the Empress had changed her plans, and had left Paris by another route.

"I was grievously disappointed. I had looked forward to the expedition with all the love of adventure which one has when one is young.

"When the Empress left the Louvre, she drove first to the house of one friend, then to that of another, but found nobody at home, till at last, in despair, she went to the residence of Dr. Evans,

the American dentist, who was fortunately within. He doubtless placed before her the danger she would incur in going by train, and prevailed upon her to accept his own carriage and horses, in which she drove to Deauville, where she embarked in Sir John Burgoyne's yacht in terrible weather and gained the English coast."

"Now let us take up the thread," said Whiffles. "You have told me some of your personal reminiscences connected with the fall of the Empire and the war. Unhappily for France misfortunes adhered to their wont of never coming single. You had the good luck to be left at Paris during the Commune."

"On the 18th of March, 1871, Monsieur Thiers and the Government fled to Versailles, and the foreign representatives had to follow them. It was necessary that someone should remain at the Embassy at Paris. It could not be a chargé d'affaires, because we could have no official communication with the Commune, so I was styled chargé des archives, a term existing in the diplomatic hierarchy, but rarely used."

"I do not," said Whiffles, "ask you to give a history of the Commune—that has already been well and amply done by others; but as you were there from the beginning to the end, there must have been many episodes which came under your own eye, incidents which would be unknown to the historian. I suppose you were constantly in danger?"

"Oh, dear, no!" I replied. "It is true that the doings of the Commune were certainly of a nature to inspire fear for the safety of those whose lot was cast within their reach, but as a matter of fact most of the dwellers in Paris suffered little inconvenience beyond such as arose from a very natural anxiety as to what might happen next. The impression created abroad of the danger to which we who were obliged to remain there were exposed was far beyond the reality. Hardly a day passed without some exciting incident taking place, which was at once reported in the Press, and these events leavened the whole; we were supposed to be living in an unbroken sequence of them, and to be hourly in danger of our lives. The truth was that we

pursued our daily avocations pretty much as usual, and it was a noteworthy and singular fact that though there was not a single policeman in Paris, the streets were as safe as those of London. When the end came things were different, and the uneasiness of friends abroad was amply justified.

"But before I come to that I will, as you propose, give you two or three glimpses of the Commune; snapshots at what I saw myself.

ABOUT A PRIEST.

"One night at about ten o'clock, my usual hour for retiring, as I was always awaked at sunrise by the cannonading of the bombardment, I was told that two persons wished to see me on urgent private business. I went downstairs and found two individuals whose appearance baffled all guess as to their line in life. At a first glance they appeared to be rowdies from the street, their close-cropped hair indicated recent acquaintance with a prison. They wore ill-fitting clothes of a flash cut, round their necks were the brilliant coloured silk ties of disreputable boulevardiers. The moment they spoke

I felt that they were gentlemen. They were priests in disguise.

"The business on which they had come was one of everyday occurrence, the arrest of one of their order; but they sought my assistance because the individual in whose behalf they pleaded, whom we will call Father X——, was a British subject. They told me that he was in imminent danger, and that unless I came to his rescue he would probably be shot. I undertook to do all I could for him the first thing in the morning, and I asked to whom I should communicate the result of my efforts. One of them took out a card and wrote upon it an address, saying that if I asked for him at it I should be admitted.

"By seven o'clock next morning I was at the Hôtel de Ville. It was deserted. I penetrated without hindrance into the interior, and found dirty servants sweeping up dirty signs of dirty occupation. They told me that the Committee of Public Safety had sat till six in the morning and would meet again at nine, till then I could see no one. These men were as good as their masters, so selecting the most

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intelligent, I gave him my card, and telling him the object of my visit, requested him to repeat it to Citizen Paschal Grousset, the Delegate for Foreign Affairs, as soon as he arrived, and to add that I would come back at half-past nine.

"On returning at the hour named a different sight met my gaze—the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville was thronged with people who closed in a dense mass in front of the entrance. I plunged in, and, shoulder to shoulder with the surging crowd, I endeavoured to thrust my way through. As I neared the great gateway I found myself close to a young officer in naval uniform; our eyes met, and the mystical light which occasionally flashes from one person to another, though they have never met before, passed between us. I had been working my way with patience and resignation through the dense crowd. He was taller than me and of powerful build. He put his left arm round my waist, raised his right elbow to force his way, and in a second he had lifted me through the surf of human beings and landed me within the gate. Then he spoke for the first time

and asked me what I wanted. I told him. He held out his hand and said, 'Bonne chance,' and we parted never to meet again.

"The Committee of Public Safety was sitting, very excited, very much in earnest, and all the military very much over-dressed with their gaudy red lappets and brilliant sashes. I asked for Citizen Paschal Grousset. A gentleman came forward to receive me. I will not say that it surprised me, because I knew that every class was represented in the Commune, still I felt that his gentle voice and urbane manners clashed with his surroundings. He told me that he knew what brought me, as the man who had seen me in the morning had explained the matter to him, and that he had already sent orders to the Conciergerie for Father X— to be set at liberty. I was not satisfied with this, and requested that he would give me a pass to visit the Conciergerie myself in order to ascertain that the order had been carried out. After some hesitation Paschal Grousset decided to allow me to do so, making the condition that I should be accompanied by an officer.

"Within a few minutes I was in the Conciergerie, and the impression which the first glance made upon me will never be effaced. The sense of pre-existence has been experienced by everyone. It came over me when I entered those gloomy portals, but it differed from the usual experience in this, that it could be easily accounted for. A slight mental concentration enabled me to know that I was but reminded of an old engraving, which I had often seen, called, 'Les derniers jours de la Terreur,' representing the interior of the Conciergerie (the same hall in which I at that moment stood) with the victims of the first revolution taking leave of each other before being led to execution.

"The officer with me recalled me to my immediate duties, and accompanied by an official, who, however, affirmed that Father X—— had been released an hour before, we went through the prison to make sure that he was gone. There were not many prisoners, and those there were did not look as if they anticipated any immediately impending doom. Still, the place was oppres-

sive, and I was glad to be out again in the fresh morning air.

"It was clear that my reverend father was no longer in durance vile, so taking leave of the officer who had escorted me, I determined to go to the address given me over night by my two mysterious visitors.

"It will perhaps be best to maintain silence as to the direction in which I turned my steps, for reasons which will quickly be seen; suffice it to say that in ten minutes I found myself opposite one of those fine old hotels *entre cour et jardin* which are peculiar to Paris. I rang the bell three times before it was answered. At last the door was opened, only so far as to enable me to perceive the nose of a porter.

"'What do you want?' he said in a gruff voice.

"'I want to see Father Anselme.'

"'There are no fathers here,' he answered; 'it is a mistake.'

"'Not at all,' I said. 'Father Anselme was with me last night, and he gave me this address. I

have pressing business with him, and I beg you to let me in.'

"Still nothing but the nose and an eye and a half of my interlocutor were visible through the small aperture of the great door. He resolutely refused to open it further, and he assured me that I must have made some confusion, as there was no 'father' of any kind there. I took out my card case, and drew from it the card (my own) on which Father Anselme had written his name and address, and begged the worthy Cerberus to examine it. Suddenly I heard a female voice apostrophising me from behind the door. It put a pertinent question in terse language, 'Who are you?'

"'The Secretary of the British Embassy,' I replied. The words had a magic effect.

"'Ah, c'est différent. Entrez, monsieur.'

"The great door swung on its hinges wide enough to allow me to enter, and was immediately closed, leaving me with the porter and his wife, who were now civil in their manner.

"I found myself in an ordinary covered *porte cochère*. On the right was the porter's lodge; on the

left an apparently solid stone wall ; beyond was the courtyard backed by the main body of the building—a handsome hotel of the time of Louis XIV.

“I explained to the porter and his wife that I had come on a friendly mission in which Father X—— was concerned, and that if I might be conducted to Father Anselme I was sure of a hearty welcome.

“And now came a most curious part of the experience. The porter said, ‘Come with me.’ He went across the *porte cochère* to the stone wall, and taking hold of an iron ring he pulled open a stone door. As is usual in masonry, the stones in the wall overlapped each other in successive layers, and the door, conforming to the structure of the wall, was formed of short and long stones from top to bottom, so that when closed there was absolutely no sign of its existence. Within the door was a narrow stone staircase two feet wide.

“‘Walk up,’ said the porter ; ‘I will follow you.’

“I did so. He closed the door after us and we were in total darkness.

“‘Mount,’ he said, ‘and fear nothing ; we shall

get to the light in a moment.' And sure enough, after going up twenty or thirty steps we alighted in a small room. He now took the lead, and I followed; we went through a series of very small rooms, in each of which there were two or three beds; all had been slept in and were still unmade. We emerged on a corridor. It communicated with the main building.

"In thinking over the matter afterwards I feel sure that the porter showed excess of zeal in conducting me by this secret way. Had he ushered me in by the main entrance I should have retired without any surprise at the difficulty I had experienced in getting into the house.

"As it was, an overweening imagination carried me back to the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe. Here in the centre of Paris was a secret refuge which probably dated from the persecutions of the first Revolution. The little tenements which I had just left harboured innumerable priests. I emerged into a large hall which was full of them; some were being shaved, others were taking their early cup of coffee. My entrance caused a general

surprise ; there was no sign of fear, but just such a turn of the heads in one direction as occurs among a herd of deer in a park, in a hollow, when you suddenly break in upon them. I, indeed, hesitated, abashed, but the porter told me still to follow, and I passed through the throng to a further room which was empty.

"Here I was left awhile to my meditations. In a few minutes the door at the further extremity of the room opened, and a grey-haired priest of reverend and beautiful presence came forward and addressed me.

"I have studied beauty in various forms, and it has always struck me that it finds its most perfect expression in Roman Catholic priests and nuns who have devoted themselves to their divine mission ; they attain a beauty before which you bend in reverence, feeling that it comes from God. It is the realisation of the Buddhist doctrine that if you can attain to perfect goodness you are absorbed into the Divinity, and the divine expression which comes into the faces of those who have killed their baser nature and lived for the service

of God is like the glory about the throne, and has the purity of the Holy Ghost.

"In a few words I explained the errand on which I had come; the reverend father said that Father X—— had not yet put in an appearance, and that much anxiety was felt about him. He thanked me for the trouble which I had taken, and after a few words of kindly intercourse I took my leave.

"On departing I was conducted through the main body of the building, and issued into the court from the central door of the hotel.

"Many days afterwards Father X—— came to me. He had been released on the order of Paschal Grousset before I made my second visit to the Hôtel de Ville. There was no divine expression on the father's face. On looking at him and listening to him I somewhat sympathised with the Commune for locking him up.

ABOUT A GOVERNESS.

"As long as communication by rail was open between Paris and Versailles all passengers were

compelled to show their passports to officers of the National Guard stationed at the entrance to the waiting-rooms of the railway stations. Foreign passports were supposed to be valid provided they were countersigned by some Communist authority, but it frequently happened that instead of securing free passage they only served to attract abuse on the bearer. If the officer on duty were out of temper with foreigners, or if he could not read (a by no means unfrequent occurrence), he refused to allow the applicant to pass, and all representation and appeal were merely time wasted.

"Soon after the Commune had been established I had sent my passport to the Prefecture of Police to have it properly countersigned, so that I might show it if stopped by any of the National Guard in his daily walks. It was returned to me duly countersigned 'By order of Raoul Rigault,' but with the remark that it was good for eight days only. At the expiration of the eight days I wrote a note to the Secretary of the Prefect of Police to request that the term might be made indefinite, as it was inconvenient to be obliged to send to the

Prefecture so frequently. The letter of the request was not complied with, but a special visa signed by Rigault himself was written upon the document giving liberty to the bearer 'to pass by night or day with or without horses or carriage,' and this permission was stated to be 'good for one year,' a proof of jaunty self-confidence which the Prefect no doubt enjoyed giving.

"Armed with this impressive document I went one morning to the railway station intending to go to Versailles. I fell into the string of people undergoing the examination of their papers, and, when it came to my turn, showed it with unsuspecting confidence to the examining officer, who returned it with the remark that the visa was three weeks old, and that it had therefore expired. 'But,' I cried, 'read it; you see it is good for one year, and signed by the citizen Raoul Rigault himself.' 'I know my orders—passes are only good for eight days—retire and make way for the citizens who are provided with proper papers,' so saying he turned to the next man, and I was compelled to fall out of the line. In replacing the

unlucky passport in my pocket-book, I saw that I had with me an old pass for a particular mission which I had had to make two days before, and this pass was signed by Paschal Grousset, Delegate of External Relations. Being endowed with patience, I once more placed myself at the end of the file and awaited my turn. When the officer saw me for the second time his brow lowered. 'What do you mean,' he asked, 'by coming again? You have not had time to get fresh papers; my time is not to be wasted in this way.' In giving him Paschal Grousset's orders I merely observed that I had a second paper which would probably satisfy the officer—and it did satisfy him! 'Pass, citizen,' said he; 'you are lucky to be in possession of a second passport.'

There was usually a large crowd of persons endeavouring to leave Paris by the few trains that went daily to Versailles, but very few attempted to return to it; so when I reached the railway station to catch the last train for Paris at about ten in the evening the waiting-room, illuminated by a single lamp, presented a gloomy and deserted

aspect. The door on to the platform was still locked, no newsvendor disturbed the silence; a single official occasionally looked in, but had abandoned his usual duty of asking for the tickets of the travellers.

"On the long row of benches, where in olden days throngs of visitors and holiday-seekers were wont to jostle each other to get a place near the exit on to the platform, sat five individuals, two next each other, the other three at distances which showed each to be travelling on his own account. The two who were together conversed in low tones. I seated myself, pondering over the remarkable circumstance that even five persons beside myself should be going voluntarily to the mob-stricken city, when I observed a woman standing at the door; she paused, then moved forward, and went up to the glass window through which the rails were visible, probably to see if the train were there. Seeing no sign of it, she turned, looked round, and then advancing towards the two men sitting side by side she appeared to make some inquiry of them. They looked up and shook their

heads at her. She spoke again. Again they shook their heads. Then she walked slowly from them, and coming in my direction sat upon a bench at five yards' distance from me. The light was not good enough for me to be able to distinguish her features, and my attention was not attracted to her in any particular way till I heard a sound between a sigh and a moan, a sound of deep distress, and, looking up, I saw the woman slowly wringing her hands and swaying her head very gently from side to side. 'Poor creature,' I thought to myself; 'another victim of the war, returning probably from watching the end of someone near and dear to her.' Presently the quiet moaning passed into broken sobs, and the woman, letting fall her head upon her hands, said in unmistakable English, but not as though she intended to be heard—

"'Oh, dear! oh, dear! what shall I do? what shall I do?'"

"I went over to where she sat and asked if I could be of any use to her. She raised her head and showed a young face which might have been good-looking had the eyes not been blurred

by tears. She looked at me for a moment, and then said, 'Can you tell me, sir, whether there is a train to-night for Paris?'

" 'Yes, there will be one in two or three minutes.'

" 'Is it safe to go by it?'

" 'It is safe to go by it, but no one should go into Paris who is not compelled to do so by business.'

" 'Oh, I must go; but I am so frightened! Are you going, sir?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'And will you take care of me?'

" 'Certainly,' I replied, without hesitation; for though the question was an embarrassing one, the deep anguish of her countenance forbade any suspicion of deception.

" 'God has sent you,' she murmured, and burst into a flood of tears.

" I sat down quietly by her side and gave time for her emotion to subside. There is nothing remarkable in this story except the curious account which she gave me of her trouble. I extracted it from her bit by bit.

"She had been a governess in a French family in Paris, and had run away from it on account of the alarm which she felt at the 'soldiers.' They met her in her walks, they preyed upon her in her dreams; she could not rest till she had run away from them. Thinking they were only in Paris, she had come to Versailles, but there they still haunted her. Absolutely alone and friendless, she had started off into the country, but go where she would soldiers were everywhere. She had exhausted her money. Tired, worn, her nerves unstrung, she was trying to get back to Paris to find the family she had left, but feared that it had also gone away.

"'Shall I be safe in the train?' she said piteously. 'Do you think there will be no soldiers?'

"'No,' I said; 'there will be no soldiers in the train, and I will take care of you—I am not a soldier.'

"We got back without let or hindrance. I took her to a small hotel in the Faubourg St. Honoré where I was known, and in the morning I wrote to the good clergyman, Mr. Smyth, asking him to look after her. Two or three days later I saw him,

and he told me that the young woman had turned out to be one about whom innumerable inquiries had been made. Her friends in England had sought her in every direction, for more than a fortnight all trace of her had been lost, and it was feared that she had come to a foul end.

ABOUT A LITTLE BOY.

"The British Embassy at Paris is a handsome old house *entre cour et jardin*. The front gives on to the Faubourg St. Honoré; then comes the court, at the back of which stands the main body of the building with a garden behind it stretching to the Champs Elysées. The chancery or office is in the front part, and is approached from the interior of the court. My working-room in the main building looked on to the court, and I could see the people going in and out of the office. One day I noticed a small boy hanging about the courtyard with no apparent object, and as the morning wore on I observed that he was still there, although a couple of hours must have elapsed since he had first attracted my attention.

I rang the bell for the chancery servant, and inquired why the lad was there so long. The servant replied that the child wanted to see me personally, that he had been told that if he had any business he must apply at the office, and that any of the secretaries would attend to him, but that he had refused to see anyone but me, and had said that to me alone he could confide his business; he would neither go to the chancery nor would he go away. I laughed and told the servant to bring him up to me.

"The tiny little chap came demurely into the room. He was very neatly dressed in a black jacket and turned-down collar, and looked about eight years old. He had a pinched face, a pale complexion, large black eyes, and rather a wistful and careworn expression. In the conversation which ensued between us he made use of the most careful and deliberate phrases, such as would come more naturally from a man than from a child.

"'Well, my little boy, what can I do for you?'

"'If you please, sir, my mother and I are in great trouble. We live in the Avenue de la Grande

Armée, and our apartment is most dangerously situated. The shells have struck many houses in our neighbourhood, and I am very anxious to move my mother further into the town, for I do not think it is safe for her to remain where she is.'

"'Are you and your mother alone?'

"'Yes, sir; I take care of my mother. There are two women servants, but they are no use. They are more frightened than we are.'

"'But what hinders you from leaving the house? Has any restraint been put upon you?'

"'No, sir; but we cannot go without paying our rent, and we have not got any money——'

"I had been full of sympathy and expansion towards the little fellow hitherto. I was now still full of sympathy, but somehow less expansive, and I mentally began to button up my trouser pocket.

"'That,' he said after a pause, 'was why I would not see the secretaries. Of course, they could not give me money, and I am sorry to say we want a great deal.'

"I fastened another button, and said, 'Has your mother no friends in Paris?'

"‘I do not think she has, sir; we live nearly always by ourselves. I do not think she has any friends that she could ask to help her.’

"He was feeling in his pocket now, and pulled out a card which he gave me. I held it in my hand without looking at it, and said, ‘But if I were to help you, is there anyone I could write to who knows your mother, who could tell me about her?’

"‘No, sir, I do not know of anybody; we are always alone. But we could pay if the post could come.’

"This was a statement which might perfectly be true. There were at the time numberless cases of distress because remittances could not be sent. The bankers had all fled the city, and the banks were closed, so that those who had not considerable sums by them when the troubles began were in great straits.

"‘How much do you want?’

"He looked up at me with his wistful eyes and replied—

"‘Five hundred francs, if you please, sir.’

"I fastened another button vigorously, but what was I to say; I could not argue with a mite of that age about the unreasonableness of his request.

"And then quietly, as if the whole situation was as clear to him as it was to me, he said—

"‘Of course, sir, I feel that I am asking a very great kindness of you, but I will pay you back as soon as the post opens.’

"Never did I find myself in a more awkward position. Had I a man before me I could have explained to him the absurdity of his proposal and shown him the door with such civil words as became the situation; but with this infant there were but two courses, either to give him the money or to send him away sorrowing.

"Hesitating, and hardly knowing what to say, I asked him why his mother had not come herself to ask me for the money.

"‘I do not think she thought of it, sir,’ he replied, ‘she does not know that I have come here——’

"I looked at the tiny child before me. The legend of St. Christopher flashed across my mind,

and I felt that I was overweighted. The buttons had all unfastened of themselves as he spoke.

"No change came over the boy as I gave him the money. He only said, 'Thank you, sir,' and when he had left the room in the same demure manner as he entered it I still saw for some seconds his two large, wistful eyes and his pinched little face.

"Then I looked at the card which I still held in my hand, and read—

ALINE DELVANO, Artiste.

"A variety of fanciful speculations built themselves in my mind upon that card, but the only one which seemed to have any fair foundation was that I had seen the last of those five hundred francs.

"Time passed, and the Commune came to an end in its orgie of blood and fire. About a week after it was over, on a bright spring day, I suddenly espied my little boy in the court, standing

just as he had stood a month ago, waiting patiently for notice to be taken of him. I sent for him, and he came into my room as demurely as before, but his little face looked more pinched and his eyes bigger than when I first saw him.

"‘I am very glad to see you again,’ I said. ‘I hope your mother is well, and that she has not suffered too much through all these troubles.’

"‘It has been a most anxious time for us,’ he replied. ‘I brought my mother down to an apartment in the Champs Elysées, where I thought she would be safe, but when the fighting began it was far worse than where we were before. We could not leave the house for three days, and we had nothing to eat——’

"‘Yes,’ I said, ‘it was very dreadful, but it is over at last.’

"‘Yes, sir; but my mother’s nerves have been greatly shattered by what she has gone through. I think it is better to take her away from Paris, and I have decided to move her to Wiesbaden. I think that rest will bring her round. I have

made all the arrangements, and I shall take her away to-morrow evening.'

"It is difficult to describe the peculiar impression made by this tiny mite speaking in so collected and authoritative a manner about his intentions.

"'You see, sir,' he went on, 'it is not wonderful that she should be ill. The noise of the fighting was so dreadful, and we did not dare to look out of the window because of the people who were being killed. Only one of our rooms looked on to the back, and we had to stay in it all the while. When it was over and we were able to go out again it was really as if we had walked out of hell into heaven. I should have come to you directly, but our first letters only reached us yesterday, and then I had to go to the bank to get change.'

"With that he pulled out a little pocket-book and took from it five one hundred franc notes, and said—

"'But I have brought you the money as soon as I could, sir, and my mother and I are very much

obliged to you. Good-bye, sir. Thank you very much.'

"And so he left me, and the curtain dropped on the only interlude during those gloomy days which I shall always recall with pleasure and wonder.

"And now I will go on to give you some account of the closing days of the Commune, as seen from the British Embassy.

"There were plenty of exciting moments during the week preceding the entry of the Versailles troops. On Tuesday, the 16th of May, the authorities succeeded, not without considerable difficulty, in pulling down the Vendôme column. It was announced for two o'clock, but the old monument gave more trouble than was expected, and baffled its destroyers till six in the evening, when it finally fell, making all the square tremble as it reached the ground, where it lay prone, broken into three pieces.

"On the following afternoon the cartridge manufactory at the Ecole Militaire blew up; as seen from the Embassy it was a strange sight—a

vertical column of smoke shot suddenly up into the sky about 200 feet, then came a deafening report reverberating through the air, and then the column of smoke spread at its top in every direction till the city grew dark beneath its canopy, and an incessant detonation of cartridges succeeded the first great roar. In this explosion six hundred people lost their lives.

"The Champs Elysées had already become unsafe. A bomb had fallen opposite the Palais de l'Industrie in the afternoon, when the usual crowd of Parisians thronged the avenue. It was the furthest point to which a bomb had ever reached; afterwards few pedestrians went beyond the Place de la Concorde. Standing there I saw General Dombrowski, accompanied by a brilliant staff, go at foot's pace up the central way to the Arc de Triomphe. I watched him as far as the 'arc'; he never hastened his pace, and passed safely out of sight. Not alone out of ours but out of that of all the world, which as he, poor man, thought was gazing at his coolness, for from that ride he never returned; he was killed two days later on the entry of the Versailles Army.

"Another military notoriety of those days was General Bergeret, a vain braggadocio who could only have come to the fore in such times of chaos and mental upside-downedness. As he swaggered down the Rue de la Paix on a fine horse with his disorderly following of ragamuffins in uniform, Mr. Felix Whitehurst, the genial correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, said that the General reminded him of the Earl of Leicester, because he was so like a bear and his staff was so very ragged.

"The only occupants of the Embassy at the time were Frank Lascelles* and myself. James Saumarez,† the other Secretary, had apartments in the town. On the 21st of May we dined as usual together at the Grand Café, which was one of the few still open, and afterwards played a game of billiards in the deserted halls till about ten o'clock, then home. On reaching the Embassy a letter was delivered to me. It was from Mr. Bingham, correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who lived in a house on the Place de l'Etoile, and

* Now Sir Frank Lascelles, His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin.

† Now Lord de Saumarez.

he invited us to come and spend the evening with him because the battery which had been erected on the Arc de Triomphe had been completed and was to open fire that night. Frank Lascelles was all for going; I was all for bed, not only for sleepy reasons, but, being the superior officer, I had to take other matters into consideration. Was it wise to make this nocturnal expedition? The city was not lighted, how should we find our way? Frank pointed out that there was a bright moon. It is often a disastrous thing to act upon the fear of being deemed afraid; anyhow, second thoughts brought this fear into my head and induced me to accept Mr. Bingham's invitation, like Mr. Pepys on a somewhat similar occasion, 'with no good courage at all, but that I might not seem to be afeared.' Nothing came of it. We made our way to the house as through a city of the dead. Not a soul was stirring, not a light was visible. On arriving we settled down to a rubber of whist to beguile the time, and no sound from the battery disturbed our attention from the odd trick. At two we broke up, and Frank and I groped our way

back, for now the moon had withdrawn her beneficent light, and those who have attempted to find even a perfectly familiar way when the darkness is such that you can feel it, will understand our difficulties in getting home. All things come to an end, and about three a.m. we reached the Embassy.

"However late one may go to rest one usually wakes at the accustomed hour. Now the accustomed hour with me was daylight, for as soon as the sun rose the bombardment, which made sleep impossible, began. My windows looked in the direction from which it came; the full sound seemed to break upon the house, and for weeks my sleep had come to an end between four and five. On the eventful morning of Monday, the 22nd of May, I awoke as usual, but the accustomed sound of the bombardment no longer greeted my ear—another noise replaced it. I sat up in bed and listened. Quick, sharp cracks, incessant, innumerable. Small arms had replaced the cannon; the full significance of the change came home to me at once. I knew that the Versailles troops were in the Champs Elysées, and on going to

the window I saw the tricolour flag floating over the Arc de Triomphe. I gave a sigh of relief on thinking of the danger through which I had passed. Had we played another rubber we should have probably been cut off from all possibility of return, and I should not have been at my post when my presence was most needed. 'First thoughts for me in the future, not second,' I said to myself.

"We went out into the street, and a singular sight met our eyes. The Communists were rolling barrels down it as fast as they could run. Within an hour they had made two first-rate barricades athwart the Faubourg St. Honoré—one at the Elysée, the other at the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré. It seemed to be about time to close the great gates of the Embassy. At nine o'clock a fusillade began up and down the street. The troops had apparently captured the barricade at the Elysée, and were using it for shelter and attack; but the one at the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré, which was guarded by cannon, kept them in check the whole of that Monday and the major part of the next day.

"My room was on the second floor looking on to the Champs Elysées. Frank Lascelles and I went to see what we could in that direction, but I hesitated to open the shutter lest it should attract the fire. 'Only just a peep,' urged Frank, and he moved it ajar. Immediately a bullet came whizzing through, breaking the shutter and lodging in the wall of the room behind us. 'That peep must do for to-day,' I said. 'Let us go downstairs.'

"The noise was now terrific; it combined the roar of the cannon, the bursting of bombs, the grinding of the mitrailleuse, and the rattle of the rifles. A cannon shot had struck the front of the Embassy, and had knocked in the wall of the kitchen. Still, by standing back from the windows of the Chancery we were able to see on to the street, though it was impossible to look up and down it. Just opposite was the Rue d'Astorg, at right angles with the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré. Here presently we espied Saumarez. He had got thus far on his way to the Embassy, and made signs to us that if we would open the great door he would run across and join us. At

that moment the firing up and down the street had momentarily ceased—some ten minutes had elapsed without a report. I shook my head in energetic refusal, but his beseeching pantomime was so eloquent, demonstrating the absence of firing and the rapidity with which he would scuttle across, that I was hesitating whether to order the great gate to be opened, when a little incident saved him from being exposed to the danger he wished to risk. A fluffy little white dog, newly washed and combed by the loving hands of some tender mistress, emerged from behind Saumarez, and trotted calmly into the middle of the street. In a moment crack, crack went the rifles, the bullets passed over him and under him; he cocked up his little hind legs, gave a violent sneeze, and ran back whence he came unscathed. That little dog most likely saved my friend's life. He made it clear that the street could not be passed, as nothing but a living target was wanted to provoke immediate fire, and I decided not to open the great gate.

"So the day passed. We were prisoners, and

had to trust to our imagination to picture what was going on beyond the walls of the Embassy. I made up my bed downstairs, thinking it prudent not to keep to my own room on the upper floor on account of the shells which were flying in every direction, and I slept soundly till five o'clock, when I was awakened by a servant who said that an officer wanted to see me.

"I shuffled on my clothes, and going into the hall found a colonel of the regular army who told me that he desired to go to the front of the Embassy to examine the position of the barricade at the Rue d'Anjou. I told him that if he did so it would at once attract the fire straight on to the Embassy, which I was there to protect as far as lay in my power, that there were houses to the right and the left of it from whence he could obtain equally good views, and that I could not give him the permission he requested.

"He said he had only spoken to me as a matter of courtesy, and that he required no permission, his orders being to make use of any house, be it an embassy or another, that might serve his

purpose, and on that he left me. I went into the drawing-rooms looking on to the Champs Elysées, and found the Embassy garden full of troops. They had made a hole in the wall from Baron Rothschild's garden, which adjoins ours, and were engaged in making another through the wall which separated the garden of the Embassy on the other side from that of Monsieur Perèire. I remained much interested in watching their proceedings, when the colonel again came to me, and told me that he had failed to reach the front of the Embassy through want of a ladder to get on the roof. I fancy he really had seen that what I had said to him was reasonable, and that it was but courteous to spare the Embassy if possible. He added that he had, however, a request to make to me, which was that I should arrange the dining-room as an ambulance to which his wounded soldiers could be brought. To this I at once assented. I had the long dining-table laid out its full length and mattresses placed upon it, and said to myself, 'It will be a grim reminiscence when this is all over and we have our next state dinner. However,

no wounded were brought, and the spectres of dying men do not haunt that hospitable board; but, alas! the colonel was carried back dead through the garden in the afternoon.

"At about ten o'clock a tremendous crash came upon the Embassy. Lascelles and I ran upstairs to see what had happened. A dense white smoke was issuing from my room. On entering it we found that the chimney was rent asunder. The pictures had fallen from the walls, and there was general havoc. While we were looking about us another crash came at the other end of the building, and I made up my mind that it was time to take those precautions which would best save some property of the house, were it to be burnt. So the order was given for the archives to be removed to the cellars, and we also took down into the lower regions all the valuable clocks, candelabra, and ornaments that adorned the rooms. The house had vaulted and spacious cellars, and on going down into them I found that the female portion of the establishment had already taken refuge there in fear and in tears.

"From ten to five that day was our worst time. Many shells fell on the mansarde roof. The verandahs looking on to the gardens were knocked to pieces, the mirrors in the ballroom were shattered.

"In the evening we dined in the cellar, and I do not think there was ever a quainter dinner to look at. The roof was vaulted, the walls were of stone. Against these were piled the innumerable articles which we had hastily brought down to save them in case of the Embassy catching fire—piles of archives, precious pieces of furniture, valuables, ciselé clocks and candelabra, china vases, red despatch boxes all atop of one another. It looked like the haunt of brigands who had just ransacked a stately castle and had brought the booty hither; while in the centre, in vivid contrast of neatness with disorder, was the table laid for dinner with its white tablecloth and silver candlesticks, and, to crown incongruities, Frank Lascelles and myself in evening dress and white ties, waited on by the stately butler and Embassy servants. We were prisoners for the time being, but quite first class.

"After dinner we mounted the narrow stone stairs and went into the court. The noise was still deafening, and a lurid glare filled the vault of heaven. The Communists had been driven from the barricade of the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré, and the Faubourg was free from firing. We cautiously opened the great gate and looked out. The houses forming the corners with the Rue Royale were both blazing, and the firing seemed still to be going on up and down that street; looking to the left in the direction of the Elysée everything was black as pitch. The danger, as far as the Embassy itself was concerned, was past, communication was open, and Saumarez was the first to join us.

"On the following morning as soon as it was light I went upstairs, and looking out, saw a sight which caused me greater emotion than all that had gone before. Paris seemed to be burning. As far as the eye could reach there was nothing but smoke and flame. It caused me something like anguish when it came home to me that the Tuileries was a mass of fire from end to end,

while across the Seine the conflagration of the Cour des Comptes curtained all beyond.

Work began early that morning. Message after message arrived from British subjects in distress. A boy brought me a scrawl from Lord Mark Kerr, telling me that he was arrested and imprisoned in the Boulevard, near the Parc Monceaux. I started off to go to him, and found the streets on the way more or less deserted—the fighting had gone further east. I arrived at the house of which he had given the address, a guard was at the door; with some difficulty I gained parley with an officer and explained my errand. He said he could not help me; the Englishman I inquired for might be there or might not—he rather thought there was one who answered the description, but he could not let me see him or do anything for him without an order from headquarters. Where were the headquarters? He did not know; but he advised me to be quick because the prisoners they had in the house were being taken out by batches and shot in the Parc Monceaux hard by. As he spoke I heard the

fusillade going on there. The officer jerked his head in the direction where the shots were being fired. 'Be quick!' he said, 'if there is anyone you care about here.'

"I made my way back to the Embassy as fast as possible, but was twice stopped by officers, who said that no one could be allowed to 'circulate.' They allowed me to pass on my showing my card, but I saw that I was personally rather useless on such errands, because I could not produce a *laissez passer* from a higher authority than myself. The plan to adopt was for me to issue such a document and to authorise the bearer to circulate. Saumarez at once volunteered to go to the headquarters, which he said were in the Place Vendôme. I provided him with a sheet of foolscap engrossed with a request to all authorities to allow him, as Secretary of Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy, to *passer partout*, signed it, and affixed all the stamps of the Royal Arms and *Ambassade d'Angleterre* that we possessed. This imposing sheet served him in good stead. He returned in about an hour, and was able to give me the welcome intelligence

that he had seen the chief of staff, General Borelli, who had promised to send an order for Lord Mark Kerr's release, and happily it arrived in time.

"In the meanwhile, another message had come to me to say that two English officers had been arrested and conducted to the military station at the east end of the Louvre. We knew that the street fighting still continued in this quarter, and I felt with regret that I should not be justified in ordering anyone to go to their release. Saumarez, however, again volunteered. His errand proved to be one of considerable danger. He had to creep along the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli through fire and flame, and when he at length succeeded in getting within view of the place, he saw that nothing remained but its burning walls. The two officers must be either dead or elsewhere, so he retraced his steps as best he could, and succeeded in again reaching the Place Vendôme. After strenuous inquiry, he was able to run his quarry to earth, obtained their release, and returned to the Embassy to report their safety. He had been an officer in the Guards before entering the diplomatic service,

and doubtless his military training made him the more readily undertake the errand, and carry it through with the precision of a subaltern acting under orders on the field of battle. I reported the incident in a despatch to Lord Granville, who read it out in the House of Lords.

"And here the annals of the Embassy in connection with the Commune cease. The tide of war had gone east and did not flow back. We could now walk into the garden without danger and survey the havoc. Our roof battered in, the glass of the verandah in fragments, the lateral garden walls broken through, the lawn strewn with bullets and fragments of all kinds of missiles, and, what seemed even more strange, quantities of burned paper. I picked up half-burnt sheets of the dossiers of criminals. They must have floated through the air from the burning Palais de Justice. I made a small collection of these various intruders, and subsequently placed them in a glass cabinet in a room on the ground floor of the Embassy, where they remained in safety during Lord Lyons' time. Later on they were shovelled away as valueless.

Some years since I inquired for them, but could not get beyond the easy answer that they must be somewhere, and in that vague region I fear they still repose instead of being carefully preserved as was their due. The collection was an interesting memorial of historic events which will never be forgotten, and I am still indignant when the disappearance of this collection recurs to my memory.

"I went to England. Lord Granville had asked me to come and see him as soon as I arrived, and I found him in his house in Bruton Street alone at breakfast. He seemed strangely embarrassed, and after shaking me by the hand appeared to be unable to speak. I began to feel shy, and muttered something in the way of excuse for being so early. 'No, no,' he said; 'I am very glad to see you, but I am very much annoyed. Have you seen this morning's newspaper?'

"I was more and more puzzled, and replied that I had not seen it.

"'Ah,' he said, 'then it does not matter so much. I am glad you did not read it before seeing me.

It was all my fault. I speak indistinctly, and the reporters complain that they do not hear what I say. It is very unfortunate in this instance. I spoke about you last night in the House, and all that I said about you has been reported as if I had been speaking of someone else. Of course,' he went on, 'I will put it right on the first opportunity, but corrections are seldom of much use. They are like the errata at the end of a book—nobody reads them. I am very sorry about it.'

"Lord Granville's kindly disposition and goodness of heart which gained him so many friends are well illustrated by the real solicitude which he showed in this small matter.

"There was a general disposition to give me some reward for my services during the Commune, but the question of how to do it hung fire for some time. There was a rule that no one below the rank of Secretary of Legation could be made a Companion of the Bath, and I was only a second secretary. Lord Hammond, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, told me afterwards that in this dilemma they had applied for the

Victoria Cross for me, but the War Office had scouted the idea, and had said it was impossible to give it to me. The St. Michael and St. George was at that time only awarded for colonial services. It appeared, therefore, as if there was nothing to be done, till Lord Granville had the happy thought that as the rule in regard to no person lower than a Secretary of Legation being qualified for a C.B. had been made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he, in that capacity, had the power to alter the rule. He did so, and I was made a C.B. Since then I am glad to say that the example has been frequently followed, and the C.M.G. has also been liberally bestowed upon the junior members of the service since that order of knighthood was extended.

"When the announcement of my appointment as C.B. appeared in the *Times*, it was made in the following terms :—

"We are informed that the Queen has been pleased to confer the C.B. on Mr. Malet in recognition of his services in Paris during the late trying scenes, wherein his zeal and devotion

were as conspicuous as his modesty and self-denial. Lord Granville has communicated the gracious act of Her Majesty in a very flattering letter.'

"The *Times* at that period was very conservative in its editorial form; it scouted all approach to modern journalism. A comment accompanying an official announcement of this nature had not been seen before in its columns. I have always suspected that the departure which it made on this occasion from its general rule must have been due to Lord Granville, who was very intimate with its editor, Mr. Delane, and may in this way have sought to make amends for the miscarriage of the remarks he had made about me in the House of Lords.

"Twelve years later he had again occasion to speak of me in the House in the debate on the address, when the mission of Lord Dufferin to Egypt came under discussion. I should like twelve of his words to be engraved upon my tombstone:

"'No man ever deserved better of his country than Sir Edward Malet.'"

"You are talking too much about yourself," said Whiffles.

"And pray," I rejoined, "why have you interviewed me if your object was not to make me talk about myself?"

"True," he replied. "But where are your modesty and self-denial?"

"Oh! go to——"

My unfinished sentence produced a remarkable effect. I saw nothing but Whiffles' eyes, which were suddenly brilliantly illuminated. Then as suddenly they died out like an electric light when it is switched off, and left me to darkness and to sleep.

FINIS.



